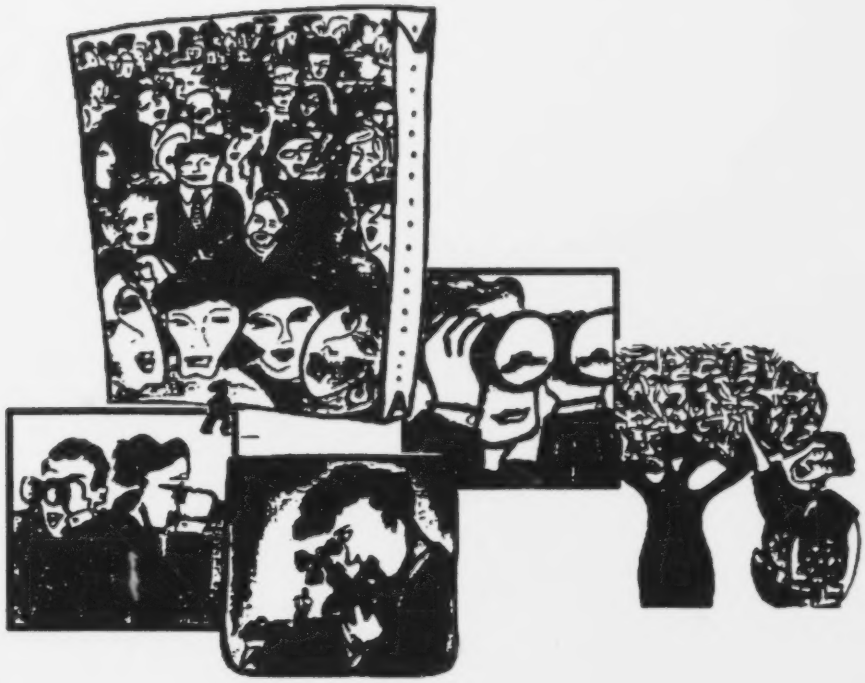

2003 Employers Survey

Final Report

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD of NOVA SCOTIA

CORPORATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC

2003 Employers Survey

Final Report

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Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia

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Introduction

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia was established in 1917 to provide financial benefits and rehabilitation services to injured workers throughout the province. In the past several years, the workers' compensation system has been significantly overhauled in an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which these services are provided. As part of these changes, the WCB established corporate performance measures to provide organizational focus and long-term measurable targets consistent with the organization's vision, mission, and values. Corporate performance is now being evaluated using internal and external measures, including annual and quarterly surveys with the organization's key stakeholders including employers, injured workers, and WCB employees.

In 1998, an initial survey was conducted with WCB-registered employers to identify how changes in the system are affecting employers and to establish benchmarks for measuring corporate performance. In 1999 and 2000, the WCB decided to redesign the employer survey to provide a more precise measurement of employer satisfaction and to establish new corporate benchmarks that will guide the organization into the new century. In addition, some questions were added or refined for the 2000 survey to increase comparability with the Injured Worker and Employee Opinion surveys. In 2001, the survey was amended so as to track key questions on a quarterly basis and in the 2002 and 2003 surveys, a few questions were added while others were deleted, so as to examine emerging issues or drop consideration of now dormant issues.

Like the 2003 Quarterly Research, this present study has been undertaken to evaluate the service performance of the WCB from the perspective of one of its key client groups – registered employers across Nova Scotia. While complete tabular results are provided at the end of this report, please note this report emphasizes only key WCB performance measures. More specifically, this study is intended to:

- Track WCB performance on existing benchmark indicators;
- Evaluate service performance across key client subgroups, including business size, region, claims history, penalties history, and payroll frequency;
- Evaluate employers' attitudes concerning assessment-related issues; and
- Provide strategic direction to the WCB in terms of service delivery and communications.

The study is based on approximately 250 telephone interviews conducted quarterly in 2003 with WCB-registered employers, for a total of 1,004 completed interviews. The results from a sample of 1,004 respondents would be expected to provide results accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. A more complete description of the methodology is provided at the end of the report.

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This report begins with a concise executive summary, followed by key conclusions, recommendations, and a detailed analysis of the survey findings, including an analysis of results by key employer sub-group (e.g. by ISU or region, claims history and penalties history). In the detailed analysis, comparisons have been made between 2003 results and previous data collected, where applicable. Appended is a copy of the survey questionnaire (Appendix A) and comprehensive banner tables (Appendix B) that present the results for each question by key employer subgroups. These tables are noted by number in the report for easy reference. Unless otherwise noted, all results in this report are expressed as a percentage.

For purposes of comparison, assessments of the WCB are described in relation to those from a similar study of employers in Newfoundland and Labrador who rated the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC). Such comparisons are made only at a high level (i.e., no specific figures are included) and only when questions in the two studies are deemed to be of sufficient similarity to warrant such a comparison.

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Executive Summary

The results of the **2003 Employers Survey** once again confirm that employers continue to hold a positive attitude towards the WCB with respect to most of the service areas of interest. Overall, employers continue to perceive the WCB to be effective in its provision of service, as well being fair to employers. Consistent with 2002, being perceived as fair is the factor most likely to be considered critically important by employers when evaluating the WCB. As was the case last year, the results suggest that WCB should work towards moving employers' ratings of WCB's fairness from the "mostly agree" category to the "completely agree" classification. Such efforts would serve to further enhance employers' positive image of WCB.

In terms of protection from litigation, a sizable number of employers are still unaware of the benefits they are entitled to under WCB coverage. It is essential that WCB take action to dispel the myth that injured workers have the right to sue employers in the event of workplace accidents. Continued efforts in this matter should be undertaken. Such action may serve not only to educate employers with valuable information, but also further contribute to the positive image most employers have of the WCB.

In comparison to the 2002 results, satisfaction with industry classification and coverage has remained stable. However, there has been a slight increase in terms of employer satisfaction with the rate at which they were assessed. While this finding does signify an improvement, this rating continues to be slightly lower relative to the high ratings the WCB receives in terms of providing benefits to employers and clearly explaining the assessment system, with respect to the fairness of the assessment and rate setting systems, as well as the affordability and coverage for workers. It is clear from these findings that employers would like to have more of a say in the decisions that affect their business and employees, with many employers endorsing a wide range of merits and demerits under the experience rating system. This provides an excellent opportunity for the WCB in terms of meeting employers assessment rate expectations, as well as involving them in matters that affect the claims' process.

Again this year, the overwhelming majority of employers report that remittance vouchers are easy to complete. Similarly, most employers consider the Statement of Account to be easy to understand, useful, and accurate. Saying that, there has been a slight decrease in the number of employers who find the completion of the wage calculation section and Form 67 Report to be easy to complete, with the percentage currently being comparable to that observed in 2001. Further exploration is required to determine what precisely makes completion of these forms problematic. Once identified, the appropriate steps should be implemented to overcome these issues.

Politeness continues to be the area where staff in both Assessment Services and Client Services receives their highest ratings from employers. With respect to Client Services, the gap analysis that was performed demonstrated there has been a marked improvement in performance most notably in terms of staff's ability to answer questions, the clarity of letters, and the frequency of contact. However, the area that requires attention is the accessibility of staff. In contrast, the service gaps for Assessment

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Services remains relatively stable. Taken together, continued effort is required to ensure employers expectations are being met.

Again this year, the WCB's brochures and newsletter receive positive reviews, with the majority indicating the information provided is very useful. In contrast, the use of the WCB's website continues to be limited and if WCB is to maintain its online presence, further identification to barriers to its use among employers is warranted. Similarly, the utilization of the 1-877 number has been slowly diminishing over the past two years and, as such, its continuance should also be reviewed.

Finally, recall of WCB's recent workplace safety advertising campaign is high, with those having seen or heard the ad indicating the campaign was effective in explaining its intended message. Overall, television appears to be the most influential medium, followed distantly by radio, newspaper, and others.

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Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the findings of this research:

- **In 2003, two-thirds of employers consider the WCB to be effective in providing service, a result that has remained constant over time.**

  In terms of effectiveness in providing service and being fair to employers, the WCB's ratings have remained stable in 2003, with two-thirds of employers offering a positive evaluation of the WCB in each of these areas. Similarly, seven in ten believe the WCB is fair to employers. In keeping with last year's findings, it is important to note that with respect to fairness, the majority of employers continue to "mostly agree," rather than "completely agree," that the WCB is fair.

  Results of this study confirm that when evaluating WCB services, employers place great importance on fairness, followed by the ability to answer questions, the clarity of letters, promptness, the payroll reporting process, and others. In contrast, the factor they are least likely to perceive as critically important is the frequency of contact. These findings are similar to those observed in 2002. In addition, and consistent with the 2002 study, three-quarters of employers are in agreement that the WCB provides a benefit to employers.

- **The percentage of employers who believe injured workers can sue employers for workplace accidents has remained stable since 2002.**

  While the number of Nova Scotia employers who are cognizant of the fact that employees cannot sue for workplace accidents has remained stable year over year, it is evident from this study that a significant minority of employers still do not have a clear understanding of their rights under such circumstances.

- **The majority of employers continue to strongly favour a wider range of merits and demerits under the experience rating system.**

  After experiencing a small decline in 2001, the percentage of employers who believe the experience rating system gives them some degree of control over the cost of their WCB rates or premiums has remained stable. Similarly, eight in ten employers continue to favour a wider range of merits and demerits under experience rating.

- **Satisfaction with industry classification used and the coverage provided to workers has remained stable, while satisfaction with the assessed rate has improved.**

  Just over half of employers express satisfaction with the rate at which their company was assessed, which represents an increase of six percentage points from 2002. Similarly, one-half of employers are satisfied with the industry classification used to set their rates. While improving, it is evident

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that employers would still appreciate having a greater say in the rate setting process.

With respect to perceptions of the coverage provided to workers by the WCB, the majority of employers continue to express satisfaction with this aspect of performance.

- **In general, employers continue to say staff in the Assessment Services Division provides a moderate to high level of service in terms of their knowledge and client skills.**

  Perceptions of the service received from the Assessments Services Division remains consistent when compared with 2002. Employers continue to be most likely to express satisfaction with the politeness of staff, with just over three-quarters offering such a positive assessment of the WCB in this regard. One in seven express satisfaction in the a rea of clarity of forms, as well as in the division's accessibility. Likewise, two-thirds of employers are pleased with this division's promptness of service and knowledge. It is also important to note that the Assessment Services Division receives a positive evaluation in terms of treating clients with respect and providing the assistance required.

  A gap analysis reveals that improving the staff's ability to treat employers fairly, making staff more accessible and providing a prompt service offers the best opportunities to raise employer ratings of the Assessment Service Division.

- **There has been a decline in employers' level of ease in completing the wage section of the Accident Report Form and Form 67 Report.**

  In 2003, one-half of employers rate the ease of completing the wage calculation section as well as completing the Form 67 Report of Accident somewhat or very easy. This represents a significant decline in both of these areas since 2002 (ease of completing the wage calculation section down 9 percentage points and the level of ease in completing the Form 67 Report of Accident down 13 percentage points from 2002). Despite these declines, the figures obtained in 2003 are consistent with those observed in 2001. In terms of communicating accident reports to WCB, faxing continues to be the most preferred communication vehicle and is consistent with the 2002 findings.

- **Satisfaction has remained stable in all areas of service, with employers expressing moderate to high levels of satisfaction with Client Services staff.**

  Similar to ratings of Assessment Services staff, the Client Services Division also receives its strongest ratings in terms of politeness, with just over eight in ten providing such a rating. Similarly, seven in ten employers also rate Client Services staff positively in terms of clarity of letters, ability to answer questions, and promptness of service. In contrast, staff members receive somewhat lower scores in terms of accessibility and frequency of contact. These findings are in line with those obtained in 2002.

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A gap analysis reveals that in comparison to last year, there has been marked improvement in most areas, most notably in terms of Client Services staff' ability to answer questions (improved by 14 points since 2002), clarity of letters (12 points), and frequency of contact (9 points). The only performance area where there has been deterioration in the performance gap is in terms of staff accessibility (worsened by 8 points).

- **Client Services staff continue to be perceived positively by employers in terms of treating them with respect, and in terms of their case knowledge.**

  Results of this study illustrate that the Client Services Division continues to be held in high esteem in terms of treating clients with respect, and is consistent with the findings of the 2002 study. Similarly, the Division's staff receives a positive evaluation pertaining to their case knowledge, however, relatively speaking, the perception of employer involvement in decisions and planning that affects their workers' claims or cases is considerably lower.

- **In keeping with findings from recent years, most employers continue to state they receive sufficient information about the WCB.**

  Overall, employers are satisfied with the amount of information they have received from the WCB regarding its activities. This finding is consistent with that obtained in 2002. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of employers believe that WCB and the newsletter 'Inside Workers Compensation' provides useful information.

- **Consistent with 2002, submitting payments at the same time as their CCRA payments is regarded as a major benefit. As well, the Statement of Account continues to be both easy to understand and useful.**

  More than eight in ten of those surveyed would prefer to remit their WCB payments at the same time as their CCRA payments, and this is consistent with last year, with the majority preferring monthly payroll reports. Similarly, employers' evaluation of the Statement of Account is once again positive, with eight in ten stating the Statement of Account is easy to understand, and also indicating that it provides useful information. Likewise, the overwhelming majority consider the Statement of Account to be an accurate reflection of the information they submit to the WCB.

- **Use of the 1-877 telephone number and the Website remains low.**

  While usage of the 1-877 telephone number continues to lag, those who have availed of this service are pleased with the ease of access. Likewise, few employers are taking advantage of WCB's website. In contrast, awareness of the Nova Scotia Business Registry appears to be slowly increasing, with a five percent increase being observed in 2003. This increase now means that one-third of employers are reporting awareness of this registry.

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- **Recall of the WCB's recent advertising campaign was relatively high.**

  Results of this study reveal that seven in ten employers have seen advertising pertaining to workplace safety in the past two months. Those who recall seeing such advertisements generally displayed a positive attitude towards the message the ad was trying to convey regarding workplace safety. Overall, television ads appear to be the most frequently recalled, while radio and newspapers ads follow a distant second and third.

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Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are presented to the Workers' Compensation Board for consideration:

1. **As a measure designed to boost overall employer satisfaction, the WCB should focus resources on enhancing its capabilities as an interactive service provider.**

   It is evident that employers continue to be less than satisfied with their level of involvement in decisions that affect both their businesses and workers. While employers appear to express a slightly more positive attitude towards the rate at which they were assessed, this percentage along with satisfaction with industry classification is less than optimal. Similarly, while the majority of employers feel that Client Services staff treat them with respect and have a good knowledge of their case, six in ten continue to feel they are involved in decisions or planning that affect their workers.

   It is understood that there are potentially some limitations with respect to employers' level of involvement with some decisions. However, WCB should review these areas and identify ways in which employers can become more involved in these processes. Increasing employers' perception of involvement in decisions that ultimately affect them and creating an atmosphere of working together in partnership may serve to have a positive impact. Ideally, informing employers as to why the processes that have been established should remain and what benefits it provides to employers and their workers may potentially have a positive impact, as employers may have a greater appreciation for the WCB's activities in these areas.

   In addition, there continue to be avenues for employer interaction and participation that are either under-utilized or not well known. For example, results of this study clearly demonstrate that the use of the WCB's website remains low, with less than two in ten employers having accessed it in the past six months. If WCB wishes to maintain its on-line presence, consideration should be given to better promotion of its site. First of all, WCB should identify why employers are not using the site and determine what, if anything, will encourage utilization of this service. It is possible that employers are simply not aware of this resource or perhaps the information they are looking for is not contained within the site. To increase usage of this medium, it is essential that the WCB determine what the prohibiting factors are and consequently take the appropriate steps to address them.

   It is also evident that utilization of the 1-877 telephone service has been diminishing over the past two years. Given its limited use, consideration should be given to better promoting this service if this is deemed desirable.

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2. **There is still a need for WCB to increase awareness among employers of the benefit of protection from litigation by injured workers.**

   As a significant minority of employers continue to believe that injured workers have the right to sue their employers for workplace accidents, there is need to correct this misconception. Communicating the fact that protection from litigation is a benefit that employers are entitled to as a result of WCB may serve to further strengthen the WCB's strong image among employers. As such, consideration should be given to developing a communications campaign to provide employers with this knowledge.

3. **The WCB should re-evaluate the wage section of the Accident Report Form and the Form 67 Report with an eye toward revising them, or alternatively provide enhanced information designed to assist in completing these documents.**

   The results of this study indicate that in comparison to 2002, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of employers who report ease in completing the wage calculation of the Accident Report Form (down 9 percentage points since 2002) and Form 67 Report (down 13 percentage points since 2002). As such, consideration should be given to identifying what precisely employers are having difficulty with and then once identified, steps should be taken to address these issues. An alternative approach to this issue would be to offer employers an online training module in which completion of these two forms was clearly articulated. One component of such a module should provide employers with an opportunity to complete the form on their own, and then pose questions online as they encounter difficulties.

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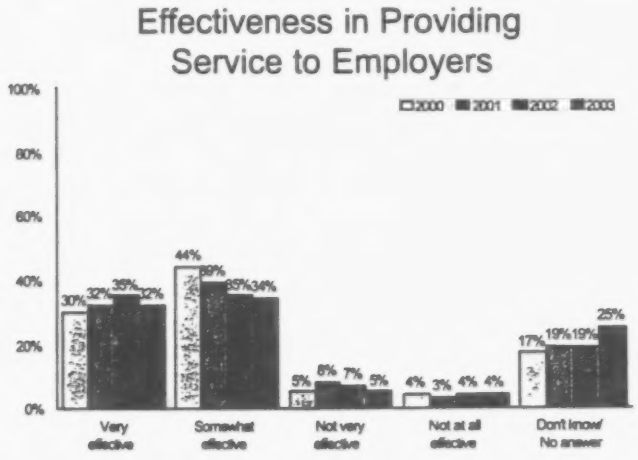
Detailed Analysis

Workers' Compensation System and Image

Effectiveness of the WCB

In 2003, two-thirds of employers consider the WCB to be effective in providing service, a result that has remained constant over time.

Overall, two-thirds of those surveyed consider the WCB to be effective in its service, stable compared with 2002 results. Nonetheless, some variations in opinion across the various Integrated Service Units (ISUs) are observed. For example, employers in the Cape Breton region (78%) continue to be more likely than those from mainland Nova Scotia to consider the WCB to be very effective in providing service, as are those classified in the 'other/miscellaneous' category (86%). (Table 2.2)



As well, large businesses continue to be more likely than small businesses to offer an opinion regarding the effectiveness of the WCB (29% of small businesses do not offer an opinion, compared with 11% of large businesses). Similarly, eight in ten large businesses rate the WCB as effective (38% very effective, 44% somewhat effective), compared with six in ten small businesses offering a similar opinion (31% very effective, 31% somewhat effective).

Others more likely to consider the WCB to be somewhat or very effective in providing service include: employers with at least one claim (84%), those who have received an Experience Rating merit (77%), employers who have filed a claims appeal (85%), and businesses with more frequent payroll (four times a month 89%, two times a month 83%). Perhaps not surprisingly, employers who have received a penalty for late accident reporting (30%) are considerably more likely than others to consider the WCB to be ineffective. In addition to small businesses, those most likely to not offer an opinion regarding the WCB's effectiveness include employers located in the Central North Shore area (32%), the South

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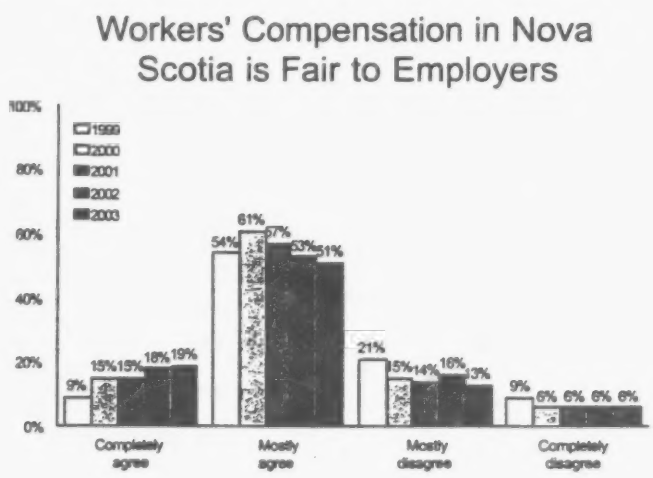
Shore/Valley area (32%), the Halifax/Halifax County area (25%), those who have never filed a claim (29%), employers those who have received an Experience Rating demerit (27%), those who have been late paying their premiums (21%), and employers with less frequent payroll (monthly 27%, quarterly 26%).

Of note, perceived effectiveness of workers' compensation organizations varies substantially between jurisdictions. Specifically, results reveal a large majority of employers in Nova Scotia report the WCB of NS to be effective in its service to them, while fewer employers in Newfoundland and Labrador express the same opinion regarding the WHSCC.

Fairness to Employers

Seven in ten employers continue to believe the WCB is fair to employers.

Another overall measure of opinion concerning the WCB focuses on the percentage of employers who consider the WCB to be fair in its treatment of employers, and results are stable compared with those observed over the past two years. In 2003, seven in ten of those surveyed express agreement that the WCB is fair to employers, while two in ten express disagreement. (Table 2.5)



Those most likely to agree the WCB is fair to employers include employers assigned to the ISU 'other/miscellaneous' category (80% agree), and those with payrolls two times a month (80%). In addition, employers in Nova Scotia are slightly more likely than their Newfoundland and Labrador counterparts to believe workers' compensation in the province is fair to employers.

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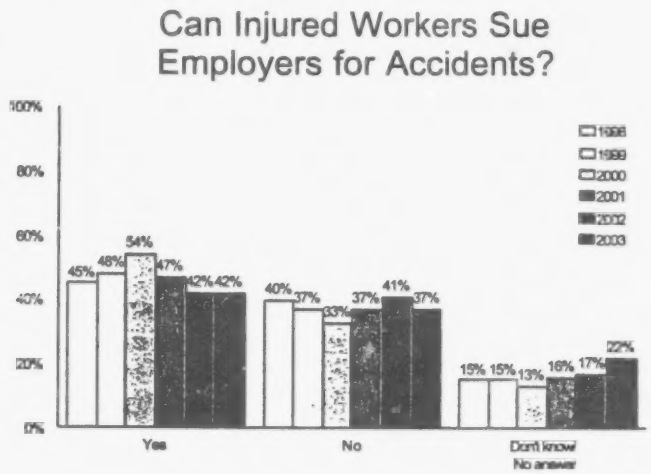
Protection from Litigation

The percentage of employers who believe injured workers can sue employers for workplace accidents has remained stable since 2002.

The 2003 study again assessed perceptions held by employers regarding whether or not injured workers can sue employers for workplace accidents. In keeping with the findings of 2002, the percentage of employers who believe injured workers can sue for workplace accidents has remained stable, with four in ten believing that injured workers have the right to sue employers. Similarly, another four in ten believe that injured workers cannot sue employers, while approximately one-fifth (22%) do not offer an opinion on this matter. (Table 2.4)



Employers who filed accident reports late (45%), employers who have earned an Experience Rating merit (44%), and those who have filed an assessment appeal (41%) are most inclined to state injured workers may can sue employers for workplace accidents, as are those with quarterly payrolls (48%).

Evaluating the WCB

Fairness and the ability to answer questions continue to be critically important considerations when evaluating the WCB's services.

Employers were asked to indicate how important various aspects of the WCB's service are to them when evaluating the service provided by the WCB. While most employers consider each factor to be important, they are most likely to identify fairness to be critically important in their evaluations of the WCB. This is especially evident among employers who have filed an assessment appeal (90%). No other demographic differences were observed (Table 2.8.7)

In general, the order of the perceived importance of the various evaluation factors has remained the same compared with 2002, with the issue of fairness being the most important factor, followed by the

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ability to answer questions, and the clarity of letters. In addition, other factors that are seen as important, but to a lesser extent include promptness of staff, payroll reporting process, politeness of staff and staff accessibility. Of interest, frequency of contact with the WCB received the lowest rating in terms of importance. (Tables 2.8.1-8)

The following differences are noted across the employer population:

Employers who have filed late accident reports (36%) are less likely than others to consider **accessibility** to be a critically important factor;

Employers with payroll two times a month (62%) are more likely than others to consider **promptness** to be critically important;

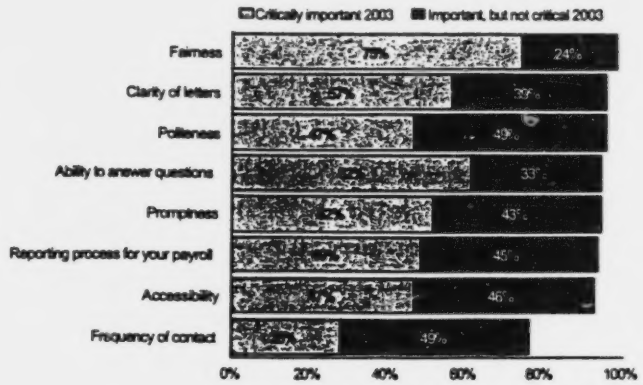
Those most likely to consider the **ability to answer questions** to be critically important include those who have filed an assessment appeal (77%), and employers with payroll two times a month (71%);

Frequency of contact is more likely to be rated as critically important by employers with quarterly payroll (39%), small businesses (30%), and those who have filed at least one claim (20%), and is less likely to be considered critically important by employers who have filed late accident reports (8%);

Politeness of WCB staff is most likely to be rated as critically important by employers who have filed a claims appeal (57%), and is less likely to be considered critically important by employers who have been late filing an accident report (34%), and those with payroll two times a month (39%).

Those most likely to consider the **reporting process for payroll** to be critically important include employers with payroll two times a month (62%), while employers who have been late filing accident reports (36%) are less likely to consider this factor to be critically important.

Importance of Evaluating WCB's Services



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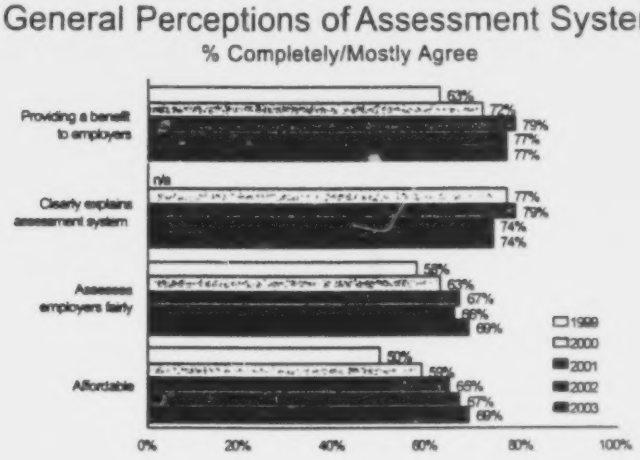
Assessment Rates and Experience Rating

In 2003, employers are satisfied with WCB's assessment and rate setting system.

General Perceptions of Assessment Rates

Employer perceptions regarding the WCB assessment system are consistent with those observed in the previous two years.



Of those surveyed seven in ten continue to agree the WCB's coverage is affordable, while three in ten (27%) disagree. Those most likely to consider the WCB to be affordable include employers with quarterly payroll (76%), those who have never had a claim (70%), those who have filed an assessment appeal (75%), those with late premium payments (69%), and employers who have earned an Experience Rating demerit (68%). In contrast, employers who have been late filing an accident report (41%) are least likely to consider the WCB to be affordable. (Table 3.1.1)

Employers continue to be apt to perceive that the WCB provides a benefit, with three-quarters agreeing **the WCB is providing a benefit to employers**. Consistent with 2002 results, two in ten (18%) employers disagree the WCB provides a benefit, while few (5%) do not offer an opinion. Employers in Central/North Shore (84%), and those who are classified in the ISU 'other/ miscellaneous' category (85%), are more likely to agree the WCB provides a benefit to employers. In contrast, employers who have filed an accident report late (55%) are least likely to agree the WCB provides a benefit to employers. (Table 3.1.2)

Based on their claims cost experience, seven in ten employers agree **the WCB assesses employers fairly**. Employers from the Halifax area (62%) and Cape Breton (62%) are less likely than others to believe the WCB assesses employers fairly. In addition, employers who have been late filing an accident report (49%) or have filed an assessment appeal (42%) are least likely to consider the WCB to be fair in its assessment of employers. (Table 3.1.3)

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More than seven in ten employers continue to rate the WCB positively in terms of **clearly explaining the assessment system**, while just over two in ten do not agree the assessment system is clearly explained. Employers who have filed an accident report late (57%) are least likely to say the WCB clearly explains the assessment system. No other demographic differences were observed. (Table 3.1.4)

General Perceptions of Experience Rating

The majority of employers continue to strongly favour a wider range of merits and demerits under the experience rating system.

WCB-registered businesses are assessed at a rate of payment based on a number of factors such as the industry in which they work and the number of previous accidents and costs at their workplace. Further, the experience rating system modifies an employer's industry rate to reflect individual claims experience. Employers' satisfaction with their assessed rates, no doubt, plays a role in determining their overall level of satisfaction towards the WCB.

After experiencing a decline in 2002 in the percentage of employers who believe the experience rating system gives them some control over the cost of their WCB rates or premiums, it appears that employers' views have remained stable over the past year. More specifically, six in ten of those surveyed continue to express agreement, while three in ten disagreeing with this statement. The remaining nine percent do not offer an opinion on this matter. (Table 3.2.1)

Employers in the Halifax area (56%) are least likely to agree the experience rating system gives them some control over the cost of their WCB rates/premiums. No other demographic differences were observed. Provincially, employers in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be more inclined than those in Nova Scotia to agree the experience rating system gives them some control over the cost of their workers' compensation rates and premiums.

Likewise, the percentage of employers who favour a wider range of merits and demerits under experience rating is stable at eight in ten. Ratings are fairly consistent across the employer population, with the exception of employers with payroll two times a month, who are more likely to favour a wider range of merits and demerits (75% agree). Overall, close to one in ten (7%) disagree a wider range of merits and demerits should be included, while one in ten (14%) do not offer an opinion. Of interest, results continue to show little difference between employers in Newfoundland and Labrador and those in Nova Scotia in terms of their support for a wider range of merits and demerits. (Table 3.2.2)

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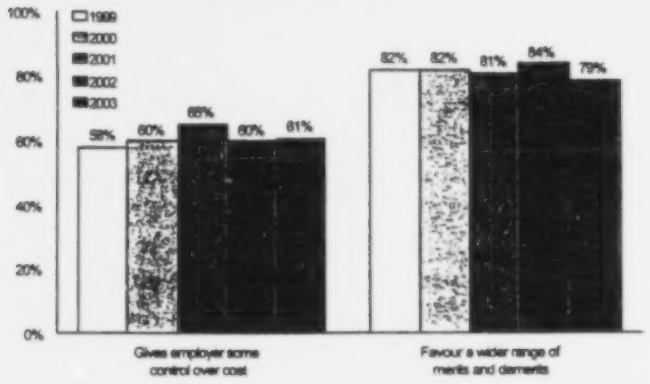
General Perceptions of Experience Rating

% Completely/Mostly Agree



Satisfaction with the Assessment System

Satisfaction with industry classification used and the coverage provided to workers has remained stable, while satisfaction with assessed rate has improved.

The percentage of employers who are completely or mostly satisfied with the rate assessed for their company modestly increased this year. In 2003, the majority of employers are satisfied with their company's rate assessment, with just over one-half indicating they are mostly or completely satisfied with the WCB in this regard (an increase of 6 percentage points as compared with 2002), while one in four employers (23%) is dissatisfied with their assessment rate. The remaining two in ten (19%) are only somewhat satisfied.

Employers most likely to be satisfied with their assessment rate include employers with less frequent payrolls (quarterly, 61% and monthly, 54%), small businesses (56%), those who have not made a claim (57%), those who have received an ER Merit (56%) and those who have been late with their payment premiums (52%). In contrast, employers in Cape Breton are least likely to express satisfaction with their assessment rate (48%). (Table 3.3.1)

In terms of the industry classification that was used to set their rates, just over one-half of those surveyed state they are mostly or completely satisfied with their industry classification, unchanged compared with 2002. Those least likely to be satisfied with their industry classification include employers with monthly payroll (54%) and those who have filed an assessment appeal (37%). Overall, two in ten (18%) of those surveyed are dissatisfied, while the same proportion (18%) are only somewhat satisfied with their company's industry classification. (Table 3.3.2)

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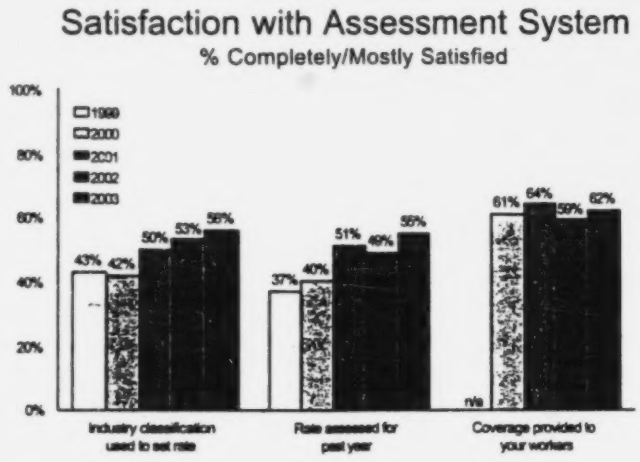
Consistent with 2002, the majority of employers continue to be satisfied with the coverage provided to their workers, with six in ten indicating they are mostly or completely satisfied with the WCB in this regard. Notably, while no differences are observed between larger and small businesses with respect to industry classification and assessment rate, large businesses express higher levels of satisfaction in terms of coverage compared with small businesses (70% as compared to 60%). As well, those most likely to be satisfied with the coverage provided to workers include employers with at least one claim (74%), those who have filed a claims appeal (73%), those with an experience rating merit (71%), as well as those employers in the ISU classification of 'other/miscellaneous' (73%). In contrast, employers with monthly payroll (61%) are less inclined to be satisfied with coverage provided to their workers.

Overall, fewer than one in ten employers (7%) are dissatisfied with the coverage provided to their workers, and just over two in ten (15%) are somewhat satisfied. More than one in ten (16%) do not offer an opinion regarding coverage. (Table 3.3.3)



Assessment Services Division

In general, employers continue to say staff in the Assessment Services Division provides a moderate to high level of service in terms of their knowledge and client skills.

Satisfaction with Assessment Services Division

The survey asked employers to rate the service they have been receiving from the WCB's Assessment Services Division, which is the department that deals with the financial aspects of the WCB such as rates, classification, payroll estimating, experience rating, clearance letters, and collecting annual assessments. Across the range of service elements, satisfaction with the WCB is stable compared with that observed in 2002.

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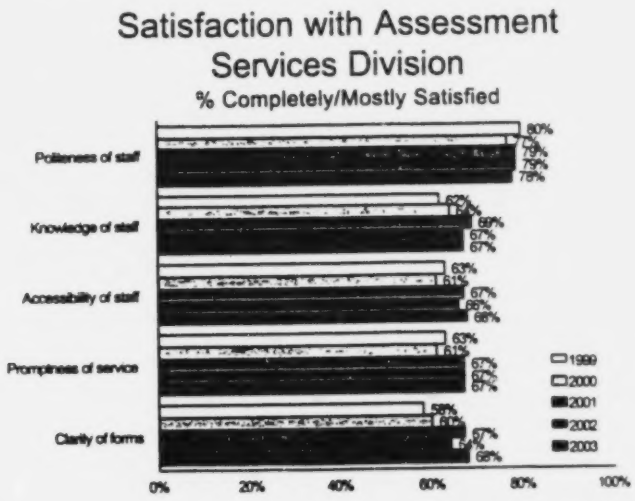
Seven in ten employers continue to view the staff of the WCB Assessment Services Division as being **accessible**. Those most likely to be mostly or completely satisfied in this regard include employers in Cape Breton (73%) and those in the ISU classification of 'other/miscellaneous' (75%). In contrast, employers who have filed a late accident report (62%) are least likely to be satisfied with the WCB. Employers in Nova Scotia continue to offer more positive ratings regarding the accessibility of WCB Assessment Services Division staff, as compared to employers in Newfoundland and Labrador vis-à-vis the WHSCC Assessment Services Department staff. (Table 4.1.1)

In fourth quarter 2003, employers who indicated that they were less than 'completely' or 'mostly' satisfied with the coverage provided to their workers by the WCB were further asked why they were less than fully satisfied with this service. Overall, two in ten reported that the WCB Assessment Service's staff are inaccessible or hard to reach, while just over one in ten attributed their low rating to either poor communication or lack of information (13%), lack of personal contact, or that they do not like voice mail (12%), slow response times or staff not returning calls (12%). No other specific reason was provided by more than 10 percent of this group. (Table 4.1.1.1)

In terms of the **promptness** of the service provided by WCB staff, just over two-thirds of those surveyed continue to express satisfaction with the WCB. Employers with (80%) payroll four times a month, those who have filed an appeal assessment (77%), and larger businesses (73%) are most likely to express satisfaction with the WCB in this regard. (Table 4.1.2) In addition, slightly higher ratings are given by employers in Nova Scotia compared with those in Newfoundland and Labrador, with respect to the promptness of service offered by Assessment Services staff members at the respective workers' compensation organizations.



Perceptions regarding the **knowledge of WCB staff** are consistent year over year, with two-thirds of employers indicating they are mostly or completely satisfied with the WCB in this regard. Employers with payroll four times a month (83%) and two times a month (72%) payroll are more apt to express satisfaction with the knowledge of WCB staff, along with those who have had at least one claim (73%),

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larger businesses (72%), those in Cape Breton (71%), and in the 'other/miscellaneous' ISU category (76%). Moreover, employers in Nova Scotia offer similar levels of satisfaction concerning the knowledge levels of WCB staff members, as do employers in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Table 4.1.3)

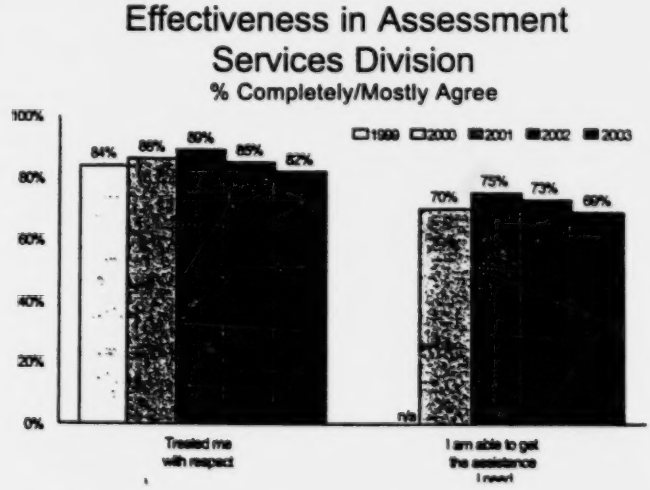
One of the strongest attributes of the WCB staff in the Assessment Services Division continues to be the level of **politeness** they display to their clients. Indeed, eight in ten employers are satisfied with the WCB's performance in this regard, and these results are stable compared with 2001 and 2002. Employers with payroll four times a month (91%), those who have filed an accident report late (86%), those classified in the 'other/miscellaneous' ISU category (84%), those who have had at least one claim (83%), and larger businesses (82%) were more likely to express satisfaction in this regard. (Table 4.1.4)

Satisfaction with the **clarity of forms** required by the Assessment Services Division is stable, with seven in ten employers indicating they are satisfied with the performance of the Assessment Services Division in this regard. Employers classified in the 'other/miscellaneous' ISU category (77%), those who have appealed a claim (74%), those who have filed an assessment appeal (72%), along with larger businesses (72%) are more likely to express satisfaction the clarity of forms. In addition, employers with at least one claim (68%) are least likely to be satisfied with the WCB in this regard. (Table 4.1.5) Further analysis reveals that employers in Nova Scotia continue to be more likely to be satisfied with the clarity of forms required by the WCB, than are employers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Effectiveness of Assessment Services Division

Assessment Services staff members continue to be perceived as treating employers with respect and providing the assistance employers require.

Assessment Services Division staff were also evaluated concerning the extent to which they treat clients with respect, as well as the extent to which clients are able to obtain the information they need from the first person in the Division with whom they speak.



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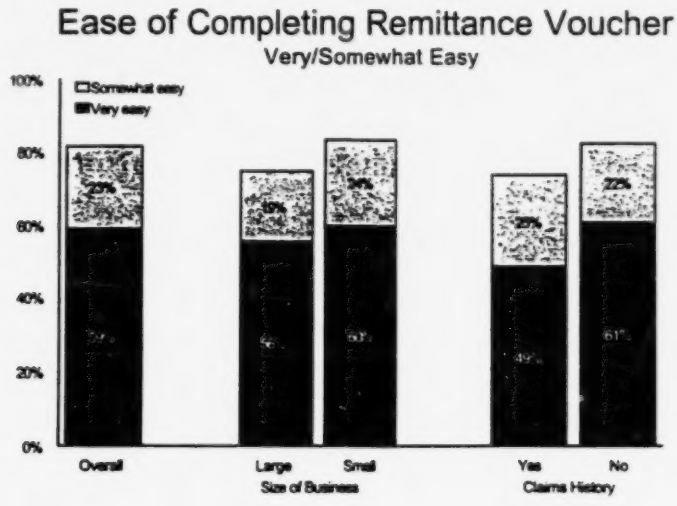
Assessment Division staff continue to receive a very strong endorsement in terms of **treating clients with respect**, with eight in ten of those surveyed agreeing they are treated with respect. Employers who have had at least one previous claim (92%), those who have filed an assessment appeal (93%), those who have been late reporting an accident (92%), along with those with more frequent payroll (two times a month 88% and four times a month 94%) are more likely to express satisfaction in this regard. (Table 4.2.1)

As well, seven in ten employers indicate they are **able to get the information they need** from the first person in the Assessment Services Division with whom they speak, a result that is consistent with that obtained in 2002. Large businesses (74%) are most apt to express with this aspect of service. In contrast, employers in Central and North Shore (65%), along with those who have filed an assessment appeal (59%) are less likely to express satisfaction. (Table 4.2.2)

Remittance Voucher

The ease of completing the remittance voucher remains high and stable.

The form submitted when making an Assessment Payment Plan payment is called a remittance voucher, and employers were asked to assess the ease with which they are able to complete this form. Consistent with previous findings, eight in ten employers say it is somewhat or very easy to complete a remittance voucher. Employers with no claims history continue to be more likely than those with at least one claim to state remittance vouchers are easy to complete, as are smaller businesses. In contrast, employers with payroll four times a month are less likely to believe the remittance voucher is easy to complete. (Table 4.4)



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Gap Analysis – Assessment Services

Since 2002, the gap scores for Assessment Services either have remained stable or widened slightly.

The 2003 *Employers' Survey* included a series of questions that assessed service factors in terms of their level of importance as well as level of satisfaction. By collecting ratings of importance and satisfaction it is possible to conduct a gap analysis. Such an analysis compares clients' expectations on a set of service factors with an organization's performance on those factors. A gap analysis is an excellent indicator of the particular service aspects the WCB should focus upon to better serve its clients. It also permits the prioritization of factors to identify those in which there is a potential gap in performance, that is, areas in which the organization is not meeting client expectations.

Gap scores are calculated as the percentage of clients who rate a factor as critically important ***and*** are less than completely satisfied with performance on that factor. Higher gap scores indicate greater gaps between expectation and performance and represent areas in which attention could be focused in terms of improvement. It should be noted, however, that gap scores tend to be higher for public sector organizations compared with private sector organizations.

As illustrated in the preceding table, 204 employers rate fairness of the WCB staff as a critically important aspect of service. Of those 204 employers, 143 of them are less than completely satisfied with the fairness of staff at the WCB. Thus, out of all 250 employers surveyed on this series of questions, 143 believe fairness of WCB staff is of critical importance, but are not completely satisfied with staff fairness, producing a gap score of 143/250 = 57 percent. In other words, six in ten employers are of the opinion that fairness is a critically important factor, and that the WCB is not meeting their expectations in this regard.

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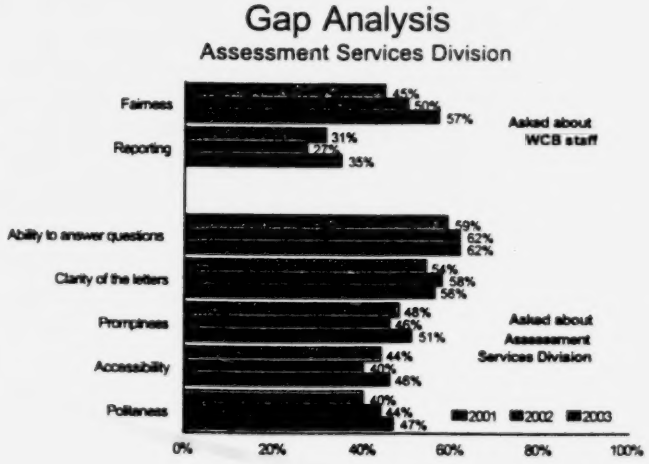
Gap Analysis Calculation: Example

Fairness of the WCB staff

	Completely Satisfied	Not Completely Satisfied	Total
Critically Important	61	**143**	204
Not Critically Important	18	28	46
Total	79	171	**250**

It should be noted that separate gap analyses were carried out for Assessment Services and Client Services. Results for Client Services are presented later. Also, the analyses reported here were conducted using data only from the fourth quarter of 2003. In addition, two of the factors, fairness and reporting, were not specifically posed concerning Assessment Services staff, rather, they were asked in regards to the WCB generally. They are included here for purposes of comparison. Overall, the results of the gap analysis indicate that the gaps in 2003 have remained stable or have increased slightly. Most notably, areas that could be deemed of higher priority for the Assessment Services Division include **fairness** (an increase of 7 percentage points since 2002), **accessibility** (up 6 percentage points), and **promptness** (up 5 percentage points).



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Accident Reporting

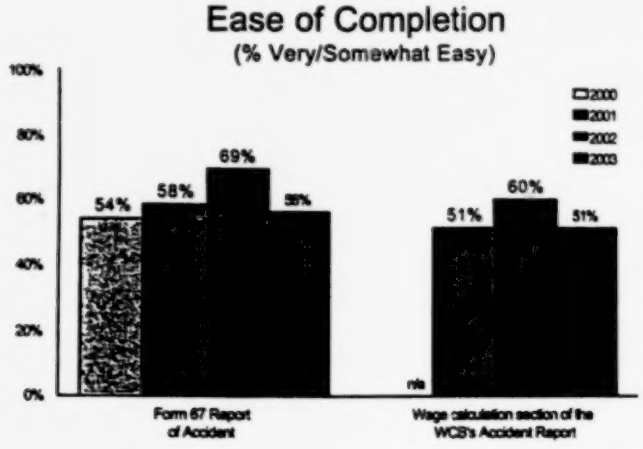
There has been a decline in employers' level of ease in completing both the wage section of the Accident Report Form, as well as the Form 67 Report.

Questions related to Accident Report Form were only asked of those employers whose total number of claims and the number of time-loss claims totalled two or more. A new Accident Report form was introduced by the WCB at the end of 2000, and employers were asked to evaluate the form in terms of ease of completion in all three years that this survey subsequently has been administered.

Ease of Reporting

Employers were asked to rate the level of ease in completing the wage calculation section of the WCB Accident Report Form. One-half employers (51%, down 9 percentage points from 2002) say it is somewhat or very easy to complete this section, while two in ten (up 8 points) feel it is very or somewhat difficult to complete this section. Two in ten (20%) indicate completing this section is neither difficult nor easy, while one in ten (10%) do not offer an opinion. (Table 5.1.3)

In addition, employers were asked to assess the level of ease in completing the Form 67 Report of Accident. In 2003, just over one-half (56%) indicate this form is somewhat or very easy to complete, which represents a significant decline in comparison to last year (a drop of 13 percentage points), but is consistent with that observed in 2000. As well, over one in ten find the form somewhat difficult to complete, while two in ten state the form is neither difficult nor easy to complete. Only seven percent of those surveyed did not offer an opinion on this matter. (Table 5.1.6) Across the provinces, in contrast to last year a smaller percentage of employers in Nova Scotia now say the Report of Accident Form is easy to complete than do employers in Newfoundland and Labrador with reference to that province's Report of Injury Form.



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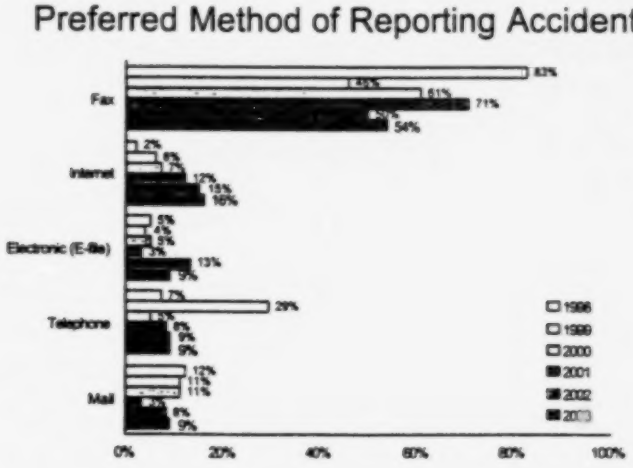
Method of Reporting

Employers were also asked to identify their preferred method of communicating accident reports to the WCB. Consistent with previous years, fax still remains the most preferred method by a wide margin over any other communication method. (Table 5.2)



Larger businesses (63%) are considerably more likely than small businesses (36%) to identify fax as their preferred reporting method, while small businesses are more likely to prefer telephone (22%, as compared with 2% for large businesses) or mail (21%, as compared with 3%). Furthermore, employers in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to agree with those in Nova Scotia that fax is the preferred method for reporting accidents.

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Client Services Division

Satisfaction has remained stable in all areas of service, with employers expressing moderate to high levels of satisfaction with Client Services staff.

The Client Services Division is responsible for managing the claims filed by workers and employers, including receiving accident reports, processing the forms, and paying benefits. Employers with at least two claims and/or time loss claims experience were asked to rate various aspects of service they have been receiving from the WCB's Client Services Division. The following table illustrates employers' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the WCB's Client Services Division. (Tables 6.1.1-6)

Satisfaction with Client Services Division

	Completely/Mostly Satisfied %					Somewhat/Completely Dissatisfied %				
	'99	'00	'01	'02	**'03**	'99	'00	'01	'02	**'03**
Politeness of staff	79	73	75	84	**83**	1	2	3	2	**3**
Clarity of letters	n/a	66	67	74	**69**	n/a	2	6	4	**7**
Ability to answer questions	65	63	69	70	**69**	3	5	6	4	**8**
Promptness of service	70	65	63	69	**70**	4	7	8	5	**4**
Accessibility of staff	64	55	58	66	**67**	3	8	11	10	**8**
Frequency of contact	51	56	61	62	**64**	8	5	9	8	**8**

Overall, employers express moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the Client Services Division, and levels of satisfaction with **politeness of staff**, **clarity of letters**, **promptness of service**, and **accessibility of staff** are in keeping with those observed in 2002.

Employers continue to express the highest level of satisfaction with respect to **politeness of staff**, with satisfaction remaining constant over the past two years. Seven in ten employers express satisfaction with respect to **clarity of letters** (down 5 points), **ability to answer questions** (stable compared with 2002), and **promptness of service** (stable).

Employers continue to be least likely to be completely or mostly satisfied with the **accessibility of staff** and **frequency of contact**, although satisfaction with the WCB with respect to these points is consistent with those observed last year with two-thirds of employers expressing satisfaction in both of these areas.

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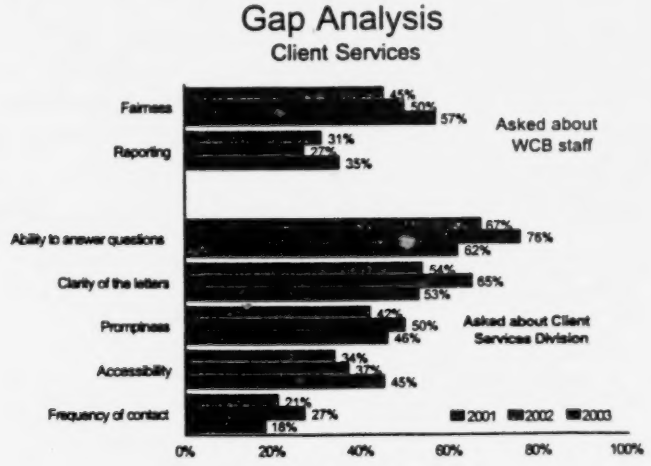
Comparing ratings of the Client Services Division (Worker Services Division in Newfoundland and Labrador) across provincial workers' compensation organizations, it is evident that employers in Nova Scotia continue to report a higher level of satisfaction on all factors relating to Client Services staff than do employers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Employers who were less than mostly satisfied with the accessibility of WCB Client Services staff were asked why they felt this way. The primary reasons for this lack of satisfaction include the perception that staff members are difficult to reach (31%), or they do not like voice mail (31%) and there is too much running around and a lack of knowledge (30%). No other specific rationale for dissatisfaction was provided by more than eight percent. (6.1.1.1)

Gap Analysis – Client Services

There has been considerable improvement in most aspects of the Client Services Division.

As was the case concerning the Assessment Services staff, a gap analysis was also conducted for service factors pertaining to the Client Services Division. Again, it is important to note two of the items, fairness and reporting, were not specifically posed concerning Client Services staff. Rather, they were asked in regards to the WCB overall. It was decided, however, to include these two items in this section, as well as the Assessment Services staff section, for the purposes of comparison.



Compared with the gap analysis conducted in 2002 and with the exception of accessibility, there has been a decrease in gap scores across each area under evaluation. It is important to note while gap scores may vary from year over year, for each service dimension examined the Client Services Division satisfaction scores reported above indicate the majority of employers are at least "mostly satisfied" with the service provided to them.

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Similar to results for the Assessment Services Division, the highest gap in performance for Client Services is the **ability to answer questions**, however, this is the performance area where the gap has dropped the most since 2002 (down 14 percentage points since 2002). Similarly, performance has improved in terms of **clarity of letters** (down 12 percentage points), **frequency of contact** (down 9 percentage points), and **promptness** (down 4 percentage points). The only area where an increase has occurred is in **accessibility** (up 8 percentage points). Indeed, close to one-half of employers believe is critically important, but are less than completely satisfied with the accessibility of the Client Services Division's staff.

General Effectiveness of Client Services Staff

Client Services staff continue to be perceived positively by employers in terms of treating them with respect and case knowledge.

Employers were asked to rate Client Services staff on a series of service-related statements, and results reveal employers generally regard the WCB positively, particularly concerning the WCB staff treating employers with respect and the level of knowledge caseworkers have about employers' cases and/or claims. (Tables 6.3.1, 4-5)

The following table illustrates employers' perceptions concerning the general effectiveness of Client Services staff.

General Effectiveness of Client Services Staff

	Completely/ Mostly Agree %			Mostly/ Completely Disagree %		
	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
Staff in the Client Services Division treated me with respect	89	93	88	2	0	3
My caseworker knows all about my workers' cases or claims	75	75	70	7	6	8
I am involved in the decision-making and planning on my workers' claims/cases	56	60	59	33	30	27

Consistent with 2002 results, close to nine in ten employers rate Client Services staff positively in terms of **being treated with respect**. In addition, seven in ten agree their **caseworker knows all about their workers' cases or claims**, down somewhat compared with 2002. Employers continue to be less likely to agree they **are involved in the decision-making and planning on their workers' claims/cases**, with six in ten continuing to express agreement.

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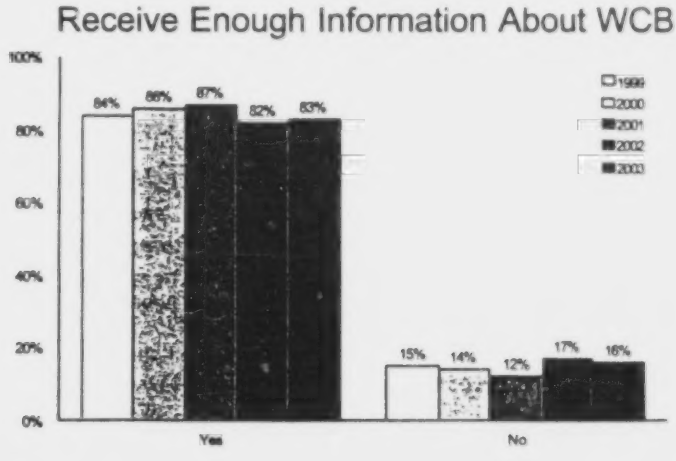
General Attitudes Towards WCB Communications

Amount of Information about the WCB

In keeping with findings from recent years, most employers continue to state they receive sufficient information about the WCB.

Consistent with 2002, the majority of employers (83%) say they currently receive adequate information about the WCB and its activities. In contrast, less than two in ten (16%) feel they receive sufficient information. While there were minimal demographic differences, employers who have filed an accident report late (75%) and those with payroll four times a month (73%) are less likely to believe they currently receive enough information about the WCB. (Table 7.1.1)



Employers who say they did not receive adequate information about the WCB and its activities were asked to identify additional information they would like to receive. Among these employers, the most common request was for more general information (72%), followed distantly by information on how the WCB operates (36%), information on entitlements, rights, or benefits (23%), information about changes (23%), claims processing procedures (20%), and how pay rates are determined (18%). No other specific suggestion was offered by more than six percent of those surveyed. (Table 7.1.2)

Effectiveness of Information Provided by the WCB

WCB communications continues to be rated very positively by employers.

Employers were asked to rate the WCB in terms of its communication with them. Results show that employers continue to offer a very positive evaluation of the WCB, and are consistent with the findings of 2002.

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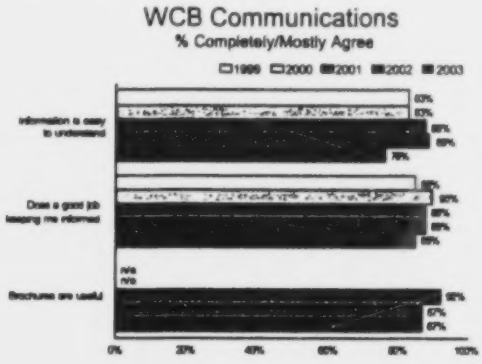
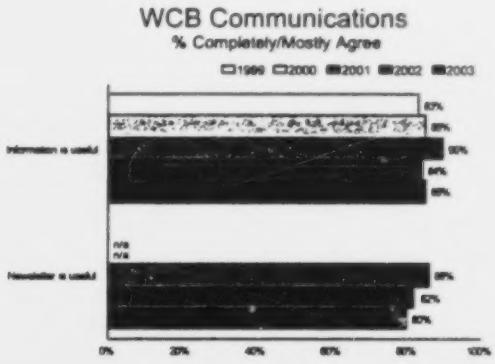
Close to nine in ten employers continue to either completely or mostly agree the WCB performs well with respect to **keeping them informed about important changes**, while just over one in ten disagree with this statement. Employers who have been late filing an accident report (74%) as well as those with payroll four times a month (77%) are less likely to agree the WCB does a good job keeping them informed about important changes. (Table 7.3.1)





Again, eight in ten of those surveyed offer a positive evaluation of the WCB in terms of **providing information that is easy to understand**, while just over one in ten employers disagree with this statement. This finding is consistent with that observed in 2002. Satisfaction with the WCB is fairly consistent across the employer population, with the exception of employers who have had a late payment premium (82%) and those with monthly pay roll (84%) being less likely than others to agree the WCB provides information that is easy to understand. (Table 7.3.2)

More than eight in ten employers agree the information provided by the WCB is **useful to them**, which is in keeping with 2002 findings. Just over one in ten disagree the information provided to them is useful. Across the population, those most likely to agree that the information is useful include those who have filed a claims appeal (93%) and employers with payroll four times a month (95%). In contrast, those less inclined to agree include employers in the Halifax area (79%), along with of employers who have filed an assessment appeal (78%), and those with a monthly payroll (84%). (Table 7.3.3)

In terms of the **usefulness of information in WCB brochures**, close to nine in ten employers continue to perceive this information to be useful, while one in ten do not. Employers who have filed a claims appeal are more likely to agree the information in WCB brochures is useful (93%), whereas those who have been late filing an accident report are less likely to agree (77%). (Table 7.3.4)

Finally, just over eight in ten employers agree the **WCB newsletter "Inside Workers' Compensation" provides useful information**, while one in ten do not. Employers who have been late reporting an accident (57%), along with those in the Halifax area (74%), are least likely to agree the newsletter provides useful information. (Table 7.3.5)

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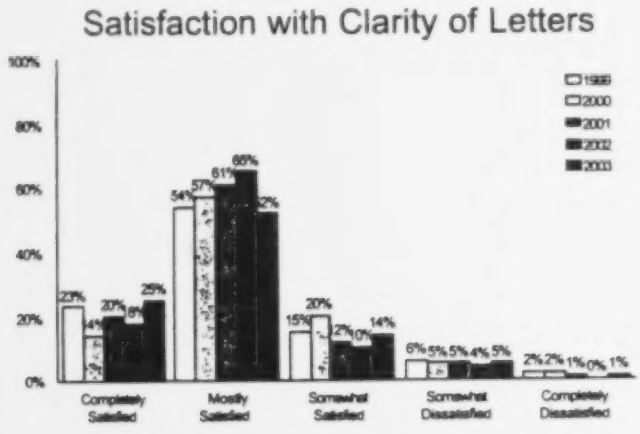
Clarity of Letters

Satisfaction remains high with the clarity of letters from the WCB.

Employers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the clarity of letters received from the WCB. Consistent with last year's findings, eight in ten employers are mostly or completely satisfied with the clarity of letters received, while few are dissatisfied. In addition, just over one in ten state they are only somewhat satisfied with the clarity. (Table 7.4)



Across the province, employers located in Cape Breton (68%), those with monthly payrolls (75%), along with those who have been late filing an accident report (69%), or have been late paying their premiums (73%), are less likely than others to express satisfaction with the clarity of letters from the WCB.

Satisfaction with the Telephone System

Half of employers continue to express satisfaction with the WCB's telephone system.

In 2001, a new question was incorporated into the study, asking employers to assess the WCB telephone system. Overall, one-half continue to be satisfied with the telephone system, while just over one in ten are only 'somewhat' satisfied. While only seven percent report being dissatisfied, it is important to note that as in 2002, the percentage of employers who do not offer an opinion remains high, with close to three in ten (27%, up 4 percentage points since 2002) not providing a definite response. (Table 1.8.1)

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Those most likely to assess the WCB positively in terms of its telephone system include employers located in Cape Breton (59%), large businesses (59%), and who have filed an assessment appeal (65%).

Assessment Payment Plan

WCB's Assessment Payment Plan continues to be perceived in a favourable manner.

Helpfulness of Assessment Payment Plan

Employers were asked to rate the extent to which the Assessment Payment Plan is helpful to their company. Close to one-half still consider the payment plan to be very helpful, while just over one-quarter consider it to be somewhat helpful. In addition, close to two in ten rate the payment plan as either not very or not at all helpful.

In addition, just over one in ten of those surveyed do not offer an opinion regarding the helpfulness of the Assessment Payment Plan. Employers with quarterly payrolls (90%) are most apt to find the Assessment Payment Plan helpful, while those who have filed an assessment appeal (47%) were least likely to find the plan of value. (Table 8.2)

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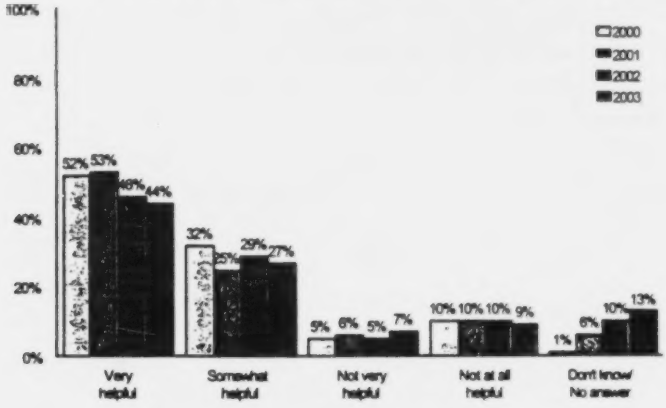
Helpfulness of Assessment Payment Plan

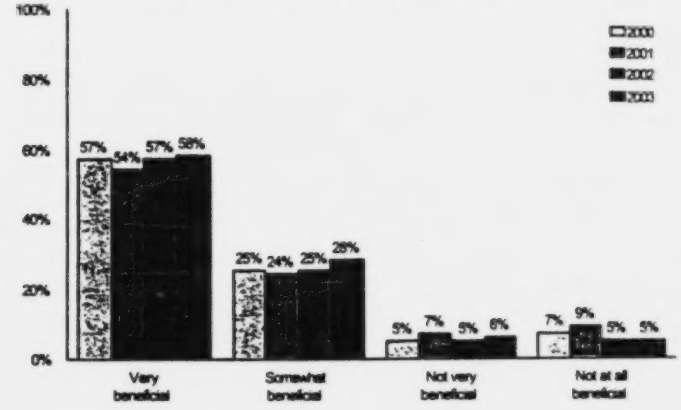


Payroll Issues

Consistent with 2002, submitting payments at the same time as their CCRA payments is regarded as a major benefit, and the majority continue to prefer to submit payroll reports on a monthly basis.

Employers were asked "**To what extent, if at all, do you find it beneficial to submit your payments at the same time as those you submit to CCRA/Revenue Canada?**" Overall, more than eight in ten employers find the ability to submit payments at the same time payments are made to CCRA to be somewhat (28%) or very (58%) beneficial. In contrast, one in ten employers do not consider this option to be beneficial, while four percent do not offer a definite opinion. (Table 8.3)

Benefit of Submitting Payments at Same Time as Payroll Reporting to CCRA



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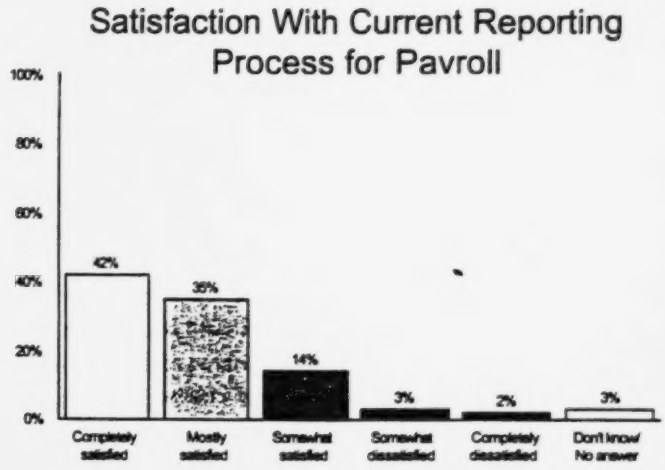
While there are variations of opinion observed across the various employer subgroups, these are due primarily to differences in the number of employers who do not offer an opinion. Those more likely to not offer an opinion include employers with payroll four times a month (28%), employers who have been late filing an accident report (19%), employers with at least one claim (14%), large businesses (13%), and those who have appealed a claim (11%).

An additional question was added to the 2003 survey, which assesses employer satisfaction with the reporting process for payroll. Overall, just over three-quarters are mostly (35%) or completely (42%) satisfied with their current reporting process, while just over one in ten are somewhat satisfied (14%). The remainder are dissatisfied (5%) or were unable to provide a definite response to this question (3%). (Table 8.4.1)



Certain demographic differences should be highlighted. Specifically, employers who have filed an assessment appeal (83%), small businesses (79%), and those who have had no claims (78%), and those who report their payroll less frequently (monthly 78%, quarterly 79%), are more likely to express satisfaction with their payroll reporting process. In contrast, those who have been late filing an accident report (65%) are less likely to express satisfaction in this area.

Employers were also asked to identify their preferred frequency for reporting payroll. Six in ten employers prefer to report their payroll on a monthly basis, which is in keeping with the 2002 findings. Similarly, two in ten continue to prefer quarterly reports, while close to one in ten prefer either weekly, twice a month or bi-weekly reports. (Table 8.4.3)

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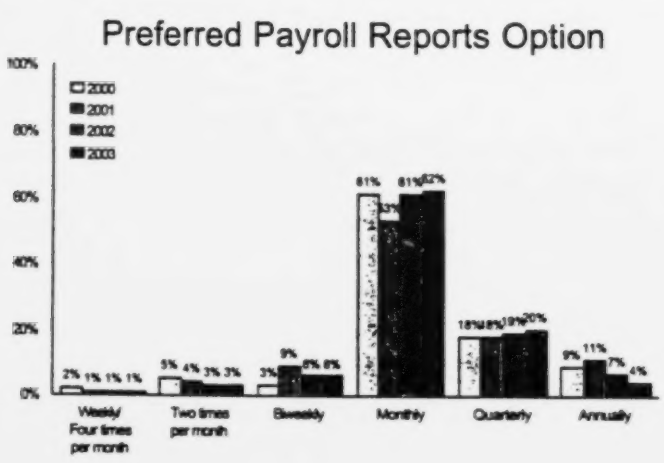

Across the population, large businesses (46%) are less likely than small businesses (65%), and employers with no claims history (63%) are more likely than those with a claims history (53%), to favour monthly payroll reporting. Similarly, employers in Cape Breton (87%) are more likely as well, as are those who have appealed an assessment (74%) or who have had an ER Merit (70%). Not surprisingly, employers who currently use monthly payroll reporting (71%) are considerably more likely than others to prefer monthly reporting, whereas those who use quarterly reporting (55%) are more apt to show a higher affinity towards quarterly reporting.

Employers were also asked whether they find it difficult to meet payroll-reporting deadlines. Eight in ten (unchanged compared with 2002) do not find it difficult to meet these deadlines, while just over one in ten (stable compared with 2002) experience difficulties. Those most likely to report difficulties in meeting payroll deadlines include those who have filed an assessment appeal (37%), employers in the Central/North Shore area (25%), small businesses (16%) and those with either monthly (17%) or four times a month (11%) payrolls. (Table 8.4.4)

Of interest, employers in the Newfoundland and Labrador area continue to offer very different opinions than those in Nova Scotia with respect to preferred payroll reporting. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there remains a clear preference among employers for annual reporting of payroll to the Commission, with minority support for quarterly reporting. In contrast, employers in Nova Scotia continue to exhibit a strong preference for monthly reporting, with only minimal support for quarterly reporting and very little support for annual reporting. The variation in preferences among employers in the two provinces is likely reflective of the different reporting requirements within the two jurisdictions. To that end, it is noteworthy that the vast majority of employers in each jurisdiction reports little difficulty in meeting payroll reporting deadlines.

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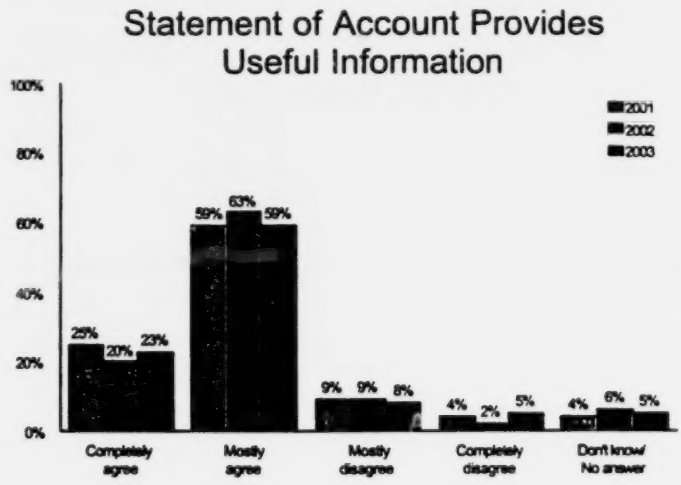
Statement of Account

The Statement of Account to continues to be both easy to understand and useful, and is found to be accurate.

When asked about the level of ease of understanding the Statement of Account, three-quarters of employers continue to assess it as somewhat (35%) or very (45%) easy to understand, with just under one in ten indicating it is difficult to understand. One in ten consider the Statement of Account to be neither difficult nor easy to understand. In terms of specific employer subgroups, employers with quarterly payrolls (89%), employers in the South Shore Valley region (89%), small businesses (82%), those with an ER demerit (82%), and those with no claims history (80%) are more likely to say the Statement of Account is easy to understand. (Table 8.5.1)

In addition, employers were asked to assess whether or not the Statement of Account provides useful information. More than eight in ten employers mostly or completely agree the Statement of Account provides useful information, stable compared with 2002 results. Just over one in ten do not agree the Statement of Account provides useful information. Small businesses (83%) are more likely to believe the Statement of Account provides useful information. In contrast, those who have appealed a claim (76%), those have filed an assessment appeal (76%) and employers with payroll four times a month (77%) are less likely to find the information provided useful. (Table 8.5.2)



Employers were also asked whether the information they submit during the month matches the information on their monthly Statement of Account. Nine in ten employers state the information does indeed match, which represents an increase of six percentage points from 2002. Only four percent report that this information does not match, while seven percent are unable to provide a definite answer. These results are consistent across the employer population. (Table 8.5.3)

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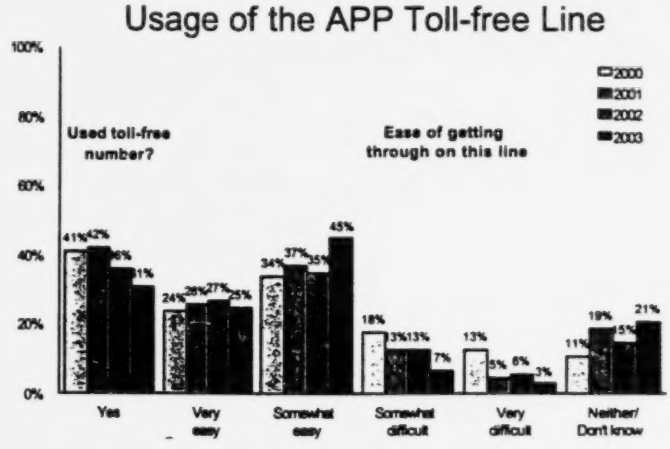
APP Toll-free Line

Use of the 1-877 telephone number that allows employers to ask questions about the Assessment Payment Plan has been declining since 2001. However, those who use the line say it is easy to get through to the WCB using this telephone number.

Employers were asked if they had contacted the WCB via the 1-877 telephone number available for companies that have questions concerning the WCB's Assessment Payment Plan. Use of this telephone service has been declining since 2001. More specifically, three in ten of those surveyed in 2003 report having used the system, compared with close to four in ten in 2002. (Table 8.6.1)



Those most likely to have used the APP telephone number include employers who have been late filing an accident report (61%), those with payroll twice a month (47%), and employers located in the Central/North Shore (43%). Large and small businesses are equally likely to have used this telephone service. In addition, usage of the toll-free line for inquiries is slightly higher among Nova Scotia employers than it is for a similar toll-free line established in Newfoundland and Labrador for employers in that province who have inquiries.

Those employers who have used the telephone number for questions related to the WCB Assessment Payment Plan were asked to rate the level of difficulty in getting through on this telephone line. Seven in ten of these employers consider it to be somewhat (45%) or very (25%) easy to get through to the WCB using this telephone number, which represents an increase of eight percentage points since 2002. (Table 8.6.2)

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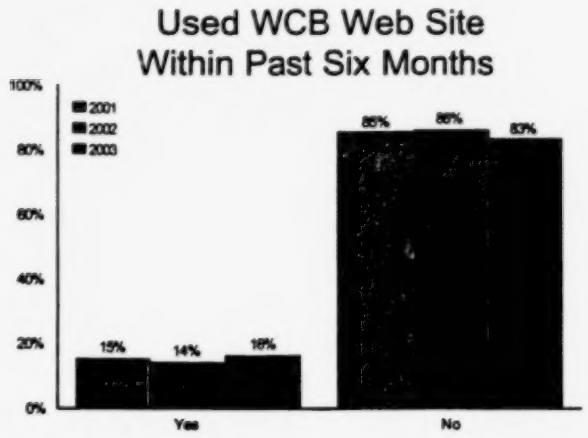
WCB Website

Usage of the WCB website continues to be very low.

In 2001, a question was asked to assess employer use of the WCB website. Use of the website continues to be low, with fewer than two in ten employers indicating they have utilized the WCB website in the past six months. Large businesses (34%) are more likely than small businesses (12%), and employers with at least one claim (29%) are more likely than those with no claims history (15%), to have used the website in the past six months. In addition, employers who have with late accident reports (49%) and those with payroll four times a month (45%) are more likely than others to have utilized the website. Usage of the WCB website among Nova Scotia employers in the past six months is on par with the level of usage at any point in the past, as reported by employers in Newfoundland and Labrador for the WHSCC website. (Table 8.6.3)



Awareness of the Nova Scotia Business Registry

Awareness of the Nova Scotia Business Registry is steadily increasing.

Employers were also asked if they had heard or seen anything about the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR). Awareness of the NSBR is starting to increase from the level recorded in 2001, with one-third of employers claiming awareness this year (up five percentage points since 2002). Awareness of the NSBR is highest among large businesses (42%), employers in the Central/North Shore area (42%), employers who have frequent payroll methods (twice a month 43%, four times a month 38%), and those who have filed a claims appeal (39%). (Table 8.6.4)

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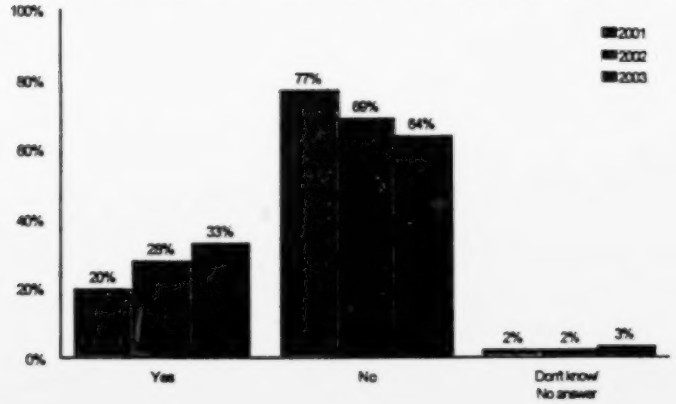
Heard or Seen Anything About the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR)

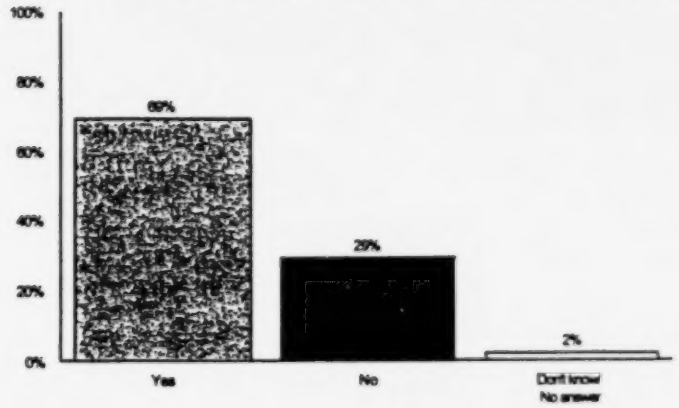


Awareness of Advertising Campaign

Recall of the recent advertising campaign was relatively high among Nova Scotian employers.

In fourth quarter 2003, a series of questions were included in the survey to assess employers' awareness of a recent advertising campaign pertaining to workplace safety. Overall, seven in ten employers recall hearing or seeing advertising about workplace safety in the past two months. In contrast, three in ten were unable to recall such advertising. (Table 4.5.2)

Heard or Seen Any Advertising in Past Two Months About Workplace Safety



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Across the employer group, those most likely to recall seeing such advertising include employers who have appealed an assessment (90%), those with quarterly payroll (84%), employers in Cape Breton (83%) and Central/North Shore (81%), as well as larger businesses (70%).

Employers who recalled seeing this advertising were asked to recount what this advertising was about. While one-third indicated that it pertained to workplace safety and safety awareness, it is important to note that another one-third was unable to provide a definite response to this question. Despite this finding, another two in ten reported that the advertising had to do with young worker safety. No other specific response was provided by more than six percent. (Table 4.5.3)

For the most part, those employers who recalled seeing this advertising campaign felt that it was effective in explaining the message of workplace safety, with more than eight in ten describing the campaign as effective. (Table 4.5.4)

Finally, employers where asked where they saw this advertising. Overall, television was the most frequently identified medium, with four in ten recalling seeing a television add. Television was distantly followed by hearing an ad on the radio (24%), seeing it in the newspaper (23%), or receiving a direct mail piece (18%). No other specific communication medium was identified by more that four percent. (Table 4.5.5)

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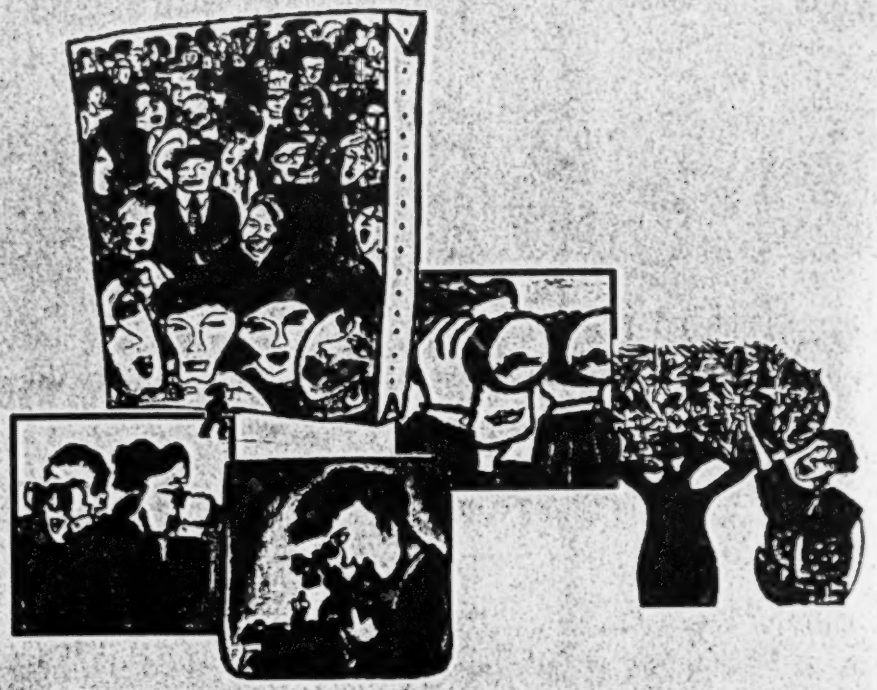

2003 Injured Worker Survey

Final Report

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD of NOVA SCOTIA

CORPORATE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC

2003 Injured Worker Survey

Final Report

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Introduction

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia was established in 1917 to provide financial benefits and rehabilitation services to injured workers in the province. In the past several years, the workers' compensation system was significantly overhauled to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which these services are provided. As part of these changes, the WCB established corporate performance measures to provide organizational focus and long-term measurable targets consistent with the organization's vision, mission, and values. Corporate performance is now being evaluated using internal and external measures, including annual surveys with the organization's most important stakeholders consisting of employers, WCB employees, and clients.

In 1997, an initial pilot survey was conducted with injured workers to identify how changes in the system are affecting clients and to establish initial benchmarks for measuring corporate performance. In 1998, the WCB decided to redesign the injured worker survey to provide more precise measurements of client satisfaction and establish new corporate benchmarks that will guide the organization into the future. In 1999 and 2000, some questions were amended so as to make the survey more comparable with those conducted with WCB-registered employers. In 2001, 2002, and 2003 consultations between CRA and WCB staff resulted in a small number of question deletions and additions to the survey instrument.

The purpose of the 2003 survey once again is to evaluate the service performance of the WCB from the perspective of one of its key client groups - injured workers across Nova Scotia. More specifically, this study is intended to:

- Track performance in key areas of service since 1997;
- Evaluate service performance across key client subgroups, including region and length of claim;
- Identify changes in performance since 1997 where comparable data are available; and
- Provide strategic direction to the WCB in terms of service delivery and communications.

This study was based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,508 injured workers who had received WCB compensation benefits. The sample consisted of 1,508 workers drawn from the general client population from all areas of the province, as well as 293 Extended Benefit Unit (EBU) claimants. The survey was conducted on a monthly basis over the course of 2003 and data were combined to produce overall year to date results.

The results from a sample of 1,508 drawn from the general client population would be expected to provide results accurate to within ±2.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (95% confidence level). The sample of 293 clients from the EBU population would be expected to provide results accurate to within ±5.6 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (95% confidence level). EBU claimants who had requested and received a decision on their claim in the past month were eligible to be surveyed. Concerning the general population, clients who had received a temporary benefit cheque in the previous month were eligible to be surveyed.

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This report begins with an executive summary, followed by key conclusions and recommendations provided for the WCB's consideration. The body of the report contains a detailed analysis of the survey findings, including comparisons with surveys from past years on key "benchmark" questions. Because the 1997 survey utilized different measurement scales, these data have been recalibrated to provide a basis for comparisons with the 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and current results. While these comparisons are valid, they should be treated with caution since different scales could have affected how clients responded to the questions. A more complete description of the methodology used to conduct this survey is provided at the back of this report.

Appended is a copy of the survey questionnaire (Appendix A), as well as comprehensive banner tables (Appendix B). These tables present the results for each question by key client subgroups (e.g. region, length of claim). These tables are noted in the report for easy reference. Unless otherwise stated, all results in this report are expressed as a percentage.

For purposes of comparison, data in this report occasionally are described in relation to those from similar studies of injured workers in other jurisdictions within Atlantic Canada. Specifically, results will be compared with a 2003 study of injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador who offered opinions of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC), and a 2002 study of injured workers on Prince Edward Island who offered opinions of the Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island (WCB-PEI). Such comparisons are made only at a high level (i.e., no specific figures are included), and only when questions in the two studies are deemed to be of sufficient similarity to warrant such a comparison.

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Executive Summary

Results from the **2003 Injured Worker Survey** demonstrate that the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia is continuing to service its clients in a positive way. In general, ratings for the WCB have remained either stable or shown some improvement since 2002, and no major problem areas have been identified. However, such a favourable review does not mean that the WCB should become complacent. Indeed, there area areas where the WCB should focus its energies to further enhance the level of service it provides to its client base.

Consistent with the 2002 findings, the WCB is still performing as well as or better than many private sector organizations, based on CRA's experience in this regard. As well, three-quarters of clients are completely or mostly satisfied with their overall experience with the WCB, which is consistent with the findings of both the 2001 and 2002 surveys. It is also important to note that the overwhelming majority of clients continue to consider the WCB to be effective in its provision of service.

Despite these positive client evaluations across a diverse spectrum of service and staff elements, the gap analysis performed highlights four areas where the WCB could potentially improve client perceptions of the organization. These areas include length of time to receive first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of staff, and ability to answer questions. In improving these perceptions, it is important that the Workers' Compensation Board continue to work towards streamlining its claims process, and ensure clients receive their first compensation cheque within two weeks of their workplace accident.

Nonetheless, the findings of this study illustrate that the majority of WCB clients are either mostly or completely satisfied with the promptness of their cheque delivery, but there continues to remain a significant minority who are somewhat less satisfied with this critically important aspect of client service.

Overall, clients are pleased with the amount of information they have received from the WCB, and most are of the impression that this information is both useful and easy to understand. CRA's analysis suggests that fulfilling client information needs is an important facet of providing overall client service, and in this regard the WCB generally is performing quite well.

Among the Extended Benefits Unit (EBU) claimants, there have been notable improvements in satisfaction across all performance areas over the past two years. However, despite these improvements, this sub-group of injured workers continue to be less likely than the general injured worker population to offer a positive assessment of the WCB.

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Key Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of this research:

- **The percentage of injured workers who report satisfaction with their overall WCB experience continues to remain high.**

  It is evident that the majority of injured workers continue to have a favourable impression of the WCB, with three-quarters of clients indicating that they are completely or mostly satisfied with their overall WCB experience. While there has been a steady increase since 1998 with respect to percentage of clients who indicate they are completely satisfied with the WCB, it appears that this increase is starting to level off. Across the client population, clients from the Halifax area, high-risk claims, EBU claimants and those that have filed an appeal are less likely to be satisfied with their overall WCB experience.

  As a justification of this high level of satisfaction with the WCB, relatively few injured workers identify any single area where they feel the WCB needs to improve the level of service provided to injured workers. As well, the overwhelming majority consider the WCB to be effective in its provision of service, consistent with opinions regarding their overall experience, with more than nine in ten clients holding such an opinion. Again, like the trend observed with overall satisfaction with the WCB, it appears that after experiencing a steady growth since 1999, the proportion of clients that consider the WCB to be very effective is beginning to level off.

- **Overall, clients continue to exhibit moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the WCB in terms of a range of service elements, with satisfaction improving in several areas.**

  As in previous years, most clients consider each of the service elements examined to be important in their evaluation of the WCB. Nonetheless, consistent with previous surveys, injured workers continue to be are most likely to consider fairness, claim outcome, and length of time to receive their first benefit cheque to be of critically importance. Relative to the four service elements previously referenced, there are three areas where there has been an increase in importance observed. Threes three areas include accessibility of staff, staff promptness, and clarity of letters.

  At least seven in ten injured workers express satisfaction with the WCB's performance on each service element, which is in keeping with the results observed in 2002. Improvement in satisfaction levels were noted with respect to politeness of staff, clarity of letters, promptness, brochure clarity, and the staff's ability to answer questions.

  A gap analysis, which weights satisfaction by importance, identified four priority areas for the WCB to improve injured workers' perceptions of the organization: length of time to receive the first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of WCB staff, and the WCB's ability to answer questions. With respect to each of these areas, at least three in ten clients consider the service element to be critically important, but are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance.

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- **In keeping with the findings of 2002, injured workers continue to provide an extremely positive evaluation of WCB staff.**

  In 2002, at least eight in ten clients are satisfied with WCB staff across a variety of service elements, with the only exception being clients' perceived involvement in making decisions that affect their case, where seven in ten clients are satisfied. These ratings of WCB staff are relatively unchanged when compared with the 2002 results.

  Across the client population, clients who have filed an appeal, and EBU claimants continue to be more critical than others in their assessment of WCB staff. In addition, medium-risk clients are more inclined than high-risk clients to rate WCB staff favourably.

- **Injured workers continue to expect initial compensation within two weeks, and most continue to be satisfied with the time it took to receive their first cheque.**

  In evaluating the benefits provided by WCB, not surprisingly, the amount of time it takes to receive the first benefit cheque continues to be a very important criterion, with close to eight in ten indicating that the first benefit cheque should be delivered to an injured worker within two weeks of an accident. This is an area where client expectation has increased slightly year over year. Given the emphasis clients place on this aspect of service delivery, the WCB should continue to work towards streamlining its claims process, and ensure clients receive their first compensation cheque within two weeks of their workplace accident. It is important to note that while the majority of clients are mostly or completely satisfied with the promptness of their cheque delivery, there is still a sizable minority who are less satisfied with this critically important aspect of service.

- **Following a significant improvement in 2001 satisfaction with WCB communications has remained stable over the past two years.**

  In general, seven in ten clients continue to be satisfied with the amount of information they receive from the WCB, which is consistent with last year's results. However, clients who have filed an appeal, EBU clients, along with high-risk clients tend to be less likely than others to consider themselves to be well informed. In contrast, clients from the South Shore/Valley region are most likely to feel they receive sufficient information from the WCB.

  At least eight in ten clients assess the WCB positively in terms of providing useful information that is easy to understand, and keeping clients informed. As in previous years, clients that have filed an appeal, and EBU claimants continue to are more likely than others to assess the WCB negatively with respect to these communications activities.

- **Consistent with the previous year's findings, the overwhelming majority of injured workers contacted the WCB for assistance during the past year, with many perceiving this contact is being effective in addressing their concerns.**

  Within the past year, more than eight in ten clients contacted the WCB for some reason or another. These findings are consistent year over year. Overall, the overwhelming majority of these clients report that they were able to achieve what they set out to accomplish from this

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contact. However, across the demographics, it is interesting to note that clients who have filed an appeal are less likely to indicate that they were successful in this regard.

- **The levels of satisfaction expressed by low-risk claims clients are in keeping with those of the larger injured worker population and, overall, satisfaction with most service among low-risk claimants has remained stable year over year.**

The majority of low-risk claimants continue to express satisfaction with their WCB experience as well as the specific service areas. For the most part, satisfaction levels have remained stable across the specific service areas under investigation. Nonetheless, length of time it took to get the first benefits cheque continues to be an issue for low-risk clients, relative to other clients.

- **Although EBU claimants continue to be less likely than other clients to rate the WCB in a favourable manner, significant improvements in satisfaction levels with the WCB have been noted in most areas for the past two consecutive years.**

Taken together, the findings from the 2002 and 2003 surveys demonstrate that significant improvements have been achieved in terms of EBU claimant satisfaction with the WCB in all areas, including accessibility, promptness, ability to answer questions, frequency of contact, clarity of letters, claim outcome, brochure clarity, overall WCB experience, and, to a lesser extent, politeness. While these improvements are notable, it is important to keep in mind that EBU claimants continue to offer a considerably less positive evaluation of the WCB relative to the overall injured worker population.

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Recommendation

Based on the results and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendation is presented to the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia for its consideration:

Recommendation: The WCB should "stay the course" with current internal service-related initiatives, as such measures clearly have been effective in promoting steady improvement in the effectiveness and performance of the organization.

Results from the 2003 study once again indicate the WCB for the most part is performing well in the eyes of one of its key stakeholder groups, namely injured workers. As in any organization, there are areas that readily can be identified as presenting an opportunity for improved performance, but for the most part the WCB is widely-regarded by injured workers as meeting or, presumably in some cases, exceeding expectations. For the organization to "stay the course" in pursuing ongoing performance enhancements appears the proper path to follow, as it is evident the WCB has considerable success in effecting positive change internally.

Nonetheless, as suggested some areas perhaps are deserving of particular attention in terms of remedial measures. For example, there continues to be an opportunity for the WCB to enhance communications to injured workers. Currently, a notable minority of clients report the WCB does not provide them with sufficient information. In addition, a gap analysis identified claim outcome as well as the ability to answer questions as albeit small but important opportunity areas on which the WCB could focus resources.

In addition, despite generally positive client evaluations across an array of service and staff factors, CRA's gap analysis highlights four areas where the WCB could potentially improve client perceptions of the organization. These areas include length of time to receive first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of staff, and, as noted, ability to answer questions. In improving these perceptions, it is important that the Workers' Compensation Board continue to work towards streamlining its claims process, and ensure clients continue to receive their first compensation cheque within two weeks of their workplace accident.

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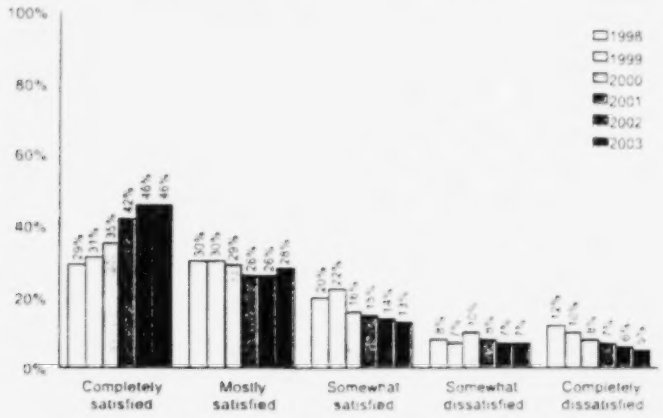
Detailed Analysis

Overall WCB Experience

The percentage of injured workers who report satisfaction with their overall WCB experience continues to remain high.

In 2003, three-quarter of clients indicate that they are completely or mostly satisfied with their overall experience with the WCB, which is in keeping with that observed in 2002. Just over one in ten are dissatisfied, while a similar percentage indicates they are only somewhat satisfied with their overall experience. (Table 1.5)

Overall Satisfaction with WCB Experience



There is some variation among injured workers in terms of overall satisfaction with their overall WCB experience. More specifically, the percentage of clients who are completely or mostly satisfied continues to be moderately lower among those in the Halifax Region ISU (72%), although satisfaction with the WCB has increased among this group of clients over the past two years. Medium-risk clients (79%) continue to be more likely than high-risk clients (67%) to be satisfied with their experience.

Not surprisingly, injured workers who have filed an appeal tend to be considerably more likely than other clients to be dissatisfied with their overall experience with the WCB. Among this client group, close to one-half are somewhat (16%) or completely (30%) dissatisfied, compared with only one-third who indicate they are mostly (22%) or completely (11%) satisfied. A further two in ten (22%) are only somewhat satisfied with their WCB experience. These findings are consistent with those observed in 2002. As well, EBU claimants are more likely to express dissatisfaction with their overall WCB experience (11% somewhat, 14% completely dissatisfied), however there has been a decline in dissatisfaction (down 9 percentage points) among this group year over year. Provincially, injured workers in Nova Scotia offer the most positive ratings with respect to their workers' compensation experience, while injured workers on Prince Edward Island express somewhat lower levels of satisfaction. In comparison, injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be least satisfied with their overall workers' compensation experience.

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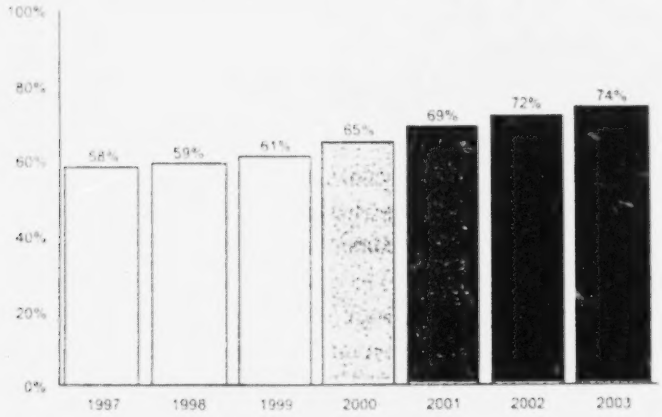
In terms of results from the past six years, there continues to be an upward trend in client satisfaction, with current satisfaction with the WCB being at its highest recorded level.

Overall Satisfaction with WCB Experience



In order to better understand the reasons behind clients' evaluation of their overall WCB experience, respondents were asked why they are satisfied or dissatisfied. Among those injured workers who are either mostly or completely satisfied (n=1,121), the most common response is an absence of problems (45%, compared with 41% in 2002), followed by helpful staff (28%, compared with 27%), an assessment that they were provided with good service (25%, compared with 26%), and a commendation from many injured workers that they received a quick response to their claim (23%, compared with 24%). No other explanation was provided by more than 17 percent of those surveyed. (Table 1.6.a)

Among those clients who say they are either dissatisfied or are only somewhat satisfied with their WCB experience (n=382), several explanations are offered with no single reason emerging as a dominant issue. Clients express dissatisfaction because of how the claim was handled (20%, compared with 12% in 2002), the belief that it was difficult to reach staff (15%, compared with 12%), the perception they did not receive enough money (15%, compared with 13%), the length of time it took to process their claim (14%, compared with 16% in 2002), staff attitude (14%, compared with 15%), the fact that their claim was turned down or terminated (13%, compared with 10%), the belief that they did not receive adequate information (12%, compared with 11%), and the fact that they were dissatisfied with the claim outcome (12%, compared with 6%). No other reason is suggested by more than 10 percent of clients. (Table 1.6c)

Clients from the South Shore/Valley (22%) ISU are more likely than those from Central/North Shore (11%), Cape Breton (12%) or the Halifax Region ISU (16%) to cite difficulty in reaching staff as a reason for being less than mostly satisfied with their overall WCB experience. Not surprisingly, clients who filed an appeal (26%) were more likely than others to express dissatisfaction with how their claim was handled, as were high-risk clients (24%).

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Client Evaluations of WCB Services

Overall, clients continue to exhibit moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the WCB in terms of a range of service elements, with satisfaction improving in several areas.

Importance of Service Factors

In the fourth quarter of 2003, injured workers were asked to assess how important various WCB service factors are in their overall evaluation of the service they receive from the WCB. Most consider each service factor to be important to their evaluation of the WCB. Three service factors continue to be regarded as critically important by the overwhelming majority of injured workers. These three factors are being treated fairly, the claim outcome, and the amount of time it takes to receive the first benefit cheque. Clients are less likely in 2003 to consider the accessibility of WCB staff (63%, up 12 points since 2002), the promptness of WCB staff (69%, up 10 points since 2002), as well as clarity of letters (73%, up 6 points) to be critically important, although the perceived importance of each has increased over the past year. With respect to the remaining service factors, the number of clients who consider each factor to be critically important has remained relatively stable since 2002. Across the provinces, most factors are considered to be critically important by a majority of injured workers, with fair treatment rated as the most important factor and frequency of contact rated as the least important. Of interest however, injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador place greater importance on most factors assessed, compared with injured workers in Nova Scotia or on Prince Edward Island (Tables 1.4.1-9)*

Importance Of Service Factors

	Critically Important (%)		Important But Not Critical (%)	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Fairness	87	89	13	10
Outcome of claim	84	81	15	16
Receipt of first benefit cheque	82	81	15	16
Clarity of letters	67	73	30	25
Ability to answer questions	71	70	24	28
Promptness	59	69	37	29
Politeness	62	67	33	31
Accessibility	51	63	42	36
Brochure clarity	60	59	31	33
Frequency of contact	40	44	52	49

* This series of questions was only asked during the fourth quarter of 2003. In the fall of 2003, 382 clients were asked to rate the importance of these service factors, providing results accurate to within ±5.0 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (95% confidence level).

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Satisfaction with Staff Services

Injured workers were also asked to indicate their level of satisfaction across these same service aspects (with the exception of fairness and receipt of first benefit cheque). Consistent with 2002, at least seven in ten of those surveyed express satisfaction with the WCB on each service element, with clients expressing the highest levels of satisfaction with the WCB in terms of politeness of staff, clarity of letters received from the WCB, promptness, brochure clarity, and WCB staff's ability to answer questions. (Tables 1.4.10a-j, 1.2)

Comparisons with previous data suggest WCB performance has remained stable relative to that observed in 2002.

Satisfaction with Staff Services

	Completely or Mostly Satisfied						
	1997 %	1998 %	1999 %	2000 %	2001 %	2002 %	2003 %
Politeness	75	76	81	83	85	87	86
Clarity of letters	69	75	73	77	81	85	85
Promptness	n/a	n/a	70	72	77	80	80
Brochure clarity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	83	76	80
Ability to answer questions	64	66	66	72	78	80	79
Accessibility	n/a	n/a	67	73	70	76	75
Frequency of contact	46	51	59	62	72	74	75
Outcome of claim	49	57	58	66	67	71	72
Receipt of first benefit cheque	45	54	57	54	67	72	n/a

Generally, clients from Cape Breton continue to be more likely than others to express satisfaction with the WCB across the majority of the service elements. Similarly, medium risk clients are also more apt to express satisfaction than high-risk clients on all the areas presented. In contrast, satisfaction across all service elements tends to be lowest among those who have filed an appeal.

Provincially, injured workers in Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador are satisfied with the performance of their provincial workers' compensation organization on all service related factors assessed, particularly in terms of the politeness of staff and the clarity of letters received. Nevertheless, injured workers in Nova Scotia generally express a higher level of satisfaction with these service related factors, compared with injured workers in the other two jurisdictions.

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Gap Analysis

As noted, the Injured Worker Survey again this year asked a series of questions concerning WCB service in terms of perceived level of importance and overall client satisfaction. By collecting such ratings of importance and satisfaction it is possible to conduct a gap analysis. A gap analysis compares clients' expectations on a set of service factors with an organization's performance on those factors. The gap analysis represents the perceived difference between the injured workers' expectations and the service they actually received. Gap analysis assists in identifying the particular service aspects the WCB could focus upon to improve client perceptions of the organization. Gap scores are calculated as the percentage of clients who rate a factor as critically important and are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance on that factor. Higher gap scores indicate greater gaps between expectation and performance, and represent areas in which attention could be focused with an eye for service improvement.

Gap Analysis Calculation: Example

Politeness of WCB staff	Completely satisfied	Not completely satisfied	Total
Critically important	167	**89**	256
Not critically important	84	42	126
Total	251	131	**382**

A gap analysis was conducted for clients interviewed in October, November, and December 2003 (the three months during which the importance questions were included on the questionnaire). As illustrated in the preceding table, 256 clients rate the politeness of the WCB staff as a critically important aspect of service. Of those 256 clients, 89 are less than completely satisfied with the politeness of staff at the WCB. Thus, out of all 382 injured workers surveyed, 89 believe the politeness of WCB staff is of critical importance and are not completely satisfied with the politeness of the staff, producing a gap score of 89/382, or 23 percent. In other words, close to one-quarter of all clients are of the opinion both that staff politeness is a critically important factor and the WCB is not meeting their expectations in this regard.

For the most part the findings from the gap analysis are favourable and generally in keeping with results from 2002. Nonetheless, there has been a slight increase in the gap scores for **accessibility** (gap score of 27%, up 8 points form 2002) and **promptness of WCB staff** (32%, up 7 points). As such, these two areas should be monitored closely to ensure that these gaps do not continue to increase. The lowest gap scores are this year again observed in **frequency of contact, brochure clarity**, **promptness** and **clarity of letters**, and **accessibility**, all receiving gap scores of less than 30 percentage points. Such low gap scores represents areas of strength for the WCB and perhaps should not be considered high priority improvement areas for the organization. Based on CRA's experience, these findings are quite satisfactory, especially given the fact that gap scores tend to be higher for public-sector organizations compared with private-sector organizations. However, there are four areas

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identified as opportunities for the WCB to improve client perceptions of the organization. These include length of time to receive first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of WCB staff to answer questions, and ability to answer questions.

Gap Analysis		
	2002 %	2003 %
Receipt of first benefit cheque	43	41
Outcome of claim	38	36
Promptness	25	32
Ability to answer questions	28	29
Accessibility	19	27
Clarity of letters	29	25
Politeness	21	23
Brochure clarity	25	23
Frequency of contact	15	20

Similar to previous findings, **length of time to receive the first benefit cheque** is identified as the highest priority area for the WCB to improve client perceptions of the organization. More specifically, eight in ten injured workers consider this to be of critical importance. Among these clients, a large number are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance, resulting in a performance gap of 41 percent.

Claim outcome continues to be an area of some concern for the WCB, with eight in ten clients considering it to be critically important to their evaluation of the WCB. Among these clients, many are less than completely satisfied with the level of service they receive, with a gap score of 36 percent, which is in keeping with the gap score observed in 2002.

With respect to **promptness**, seven in ten clients say it is critically important in their evaluation of WCB. A gap score of 32 percent is calculated, which is up slightly (7 points) since 2002.

Finally, in terms of the WCB's **ability to answer questions**, seven in ten injured workers rate this aspect of service as critically important. Of these clients, a large number indicate they are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance, resulting in a gap score of 29 percentage points, which is consistent with the 2002 results.

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Assessment of WCB Staff

In keeping with the findings of 2002, injured workers continue to provide an extremely positive evaluation of WCB staff.

The overall effectiveness of WCB staff in providing quality service is further reflected in how clients rate various aspects of service from WCB staff. With respect to each service aspect presented, clients continue to offer extremely favourable assessments of the WCB staff. (Tables 2.1.1-10)

Clients continue to offer a particularly positive evaluation of WCB staff in terms of **being treated with respect**, being provided with a **clear understanding of benefits**, being **treated fairly**, and **being provided with a clear understanding of their case or claim**, with approximately nine in ten of those surveyed expressing satisfaction with WCB staff in each of these four areas. Similarly, at least eight in ten of those surveyed express satisfaction with the WCB staff with respect to their familiarity with their case, their flexibility in meeting their needs, their explanation of the compensation process, and having an understanding of their needs. Consistent with 2002 results, clients continue to be least likely to agree they are involved in making decisions that affect their case or claim, with seven in ten agreeing they are involved in these decisions.

General Effectiveness of WCB Staff

	Completely/ Mostly Agree %		Completely/ Mostly Disagree %	
	2002	**2003**	2002	**2003**
Being treated with respect	92	**93**	7	**6**
Entitlement – providing a clear understanding of benefits	88	**87**	10	**12**
Being treated fairly	88	**87**	11	**12**
Communication – providing clear understanding of case/claim	86	**87**	11	**12**
Familiarity with case	85	**85**	10	**12**
Flexible in meeting needs	81	**82**	14	**13**
Clearly explained compensation process	81	**81**	16	**17**
Understanding of needs	81	**81**	16	**16**
Involved in making decisions on case/claim	69	**70**	25	**26**

While responses are generally positive across the various client subgroups, it is interesting to note that those clients who have filed an appeal, as well as EBU claimants, continue to be somewhat more critical in their assessment of the WCB staff. In addition, medium-risk clients are more apt than their high-risk counterparts to provide a positive evaluation of WCB staff in this regard.

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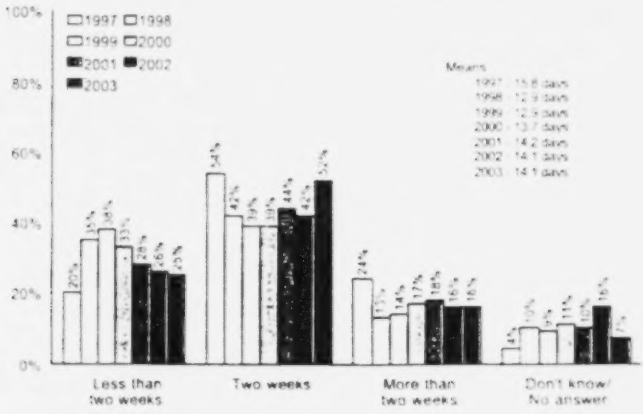
WCB Benefits

Injured workers continue to expect initial compensation within two weeks, and most continue to be satisfied with the time it took to receive their first cheque.

Expected Speed of Cheque Delivery

When clients were asked what they believe the expected turnaround time should be for receipt of their first benefit cheque, a majority indicate it should arrive in two weeks or less following an accident. In contrast, one in six clients say it should take longer than two weeks, while seven percent do not offer an opinion. These findings are consistent with those observed in 2002 and indeed have not changed substantially since 2001. The average numbers of days clients expect to wait for their cheque currently stands at 14.1, which is unchanged from 2002. It appears that since 2001, there has been a shift in expectations (in 2001 the average was 14.2 days). In looking back to previous years, it is evident that client expectations have changed modestly, as previously injured workers expected their cheque more promptly (i.e., 13.7 days in 2000, and 12.9 days in both 1999 and 1998). (Table 1.1)

How Quickly Should the First Benefit Cheque be Received Following Accident?



Across the various subgroups examined, clients from Cape Breton (32%) continue to be more likely to expect delivery of their first cheque in less than two weeks following their accident. One-quarter of clients in the Halifax ISU (25%), and two in ten in both the Central/North Shore region (20%) and in the South Shore/Valley (21%) region say delivery should take less than two weeks.

Of note, opinions regarding the expected turnaround time for benefits delivery do not vary substantially across the provinces, with the majority of workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island expecting their first benefit cheque within two weeks following their accident.

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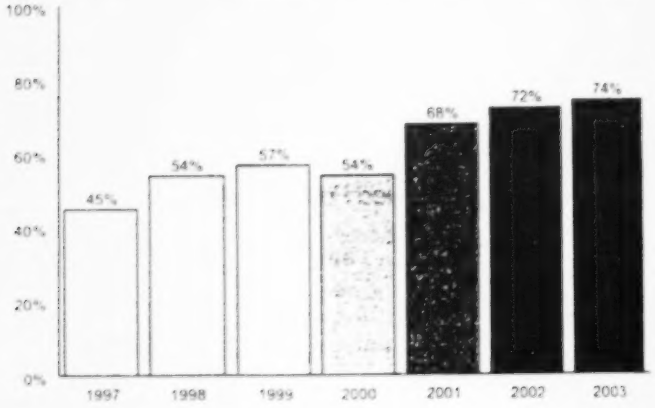
Satisfaction with Promptness of Delivery

Although some clients may not receive their benefit cheque as quickly as they might expect or hope, the majority continue to be satisfied with the length of time it took to receive their first cheque. More specifically, three-quarters say they are completely or mostly satisfied with the length of time it took to receive their cheque. In contrast, the remaining one-quarter is somewhat satisfied (13%), or is somewhat (4%) or completely (6%) dissatisfied. The remaining clients (3%) have no definite opinion at this time. Satisfaction with the delivery of the first benefit cheque continues to rise, and has increased significantly over levels measured in previous years. (Table 1.2)

Satisfaction with Promptness of Benefits Delivery



Higher levels of satisfaction are most evident among clients in the Cape Breton (79%) and Central/North Shore (79%) regions. While the level of satisfaction has remained unchanged for clients in Cape Breton, it should be noted that satisfaction levels have increased by nine percentage points for clients residing in the Central/North Shore region. Additionally, clients how have not returned to work and those classified as medium-risk, are more apt to express satisfaction with the length of time it took for them to receive their first benefit cheque. In contrast, once again those who have filed an appeal were least likely to express satisfaction.

Results reveal substantial variation in opinion on this topic across the provinces. Satisfaction with the promptness of benefits delivery is highest among injured workers in Nova Scotia, with the level of satisfaction among injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador slightly lower. In contrast, satisfaction with the timeliness of benefits delivery is significantly lower among injured workers on Prince Edward Island.

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WCB Communications

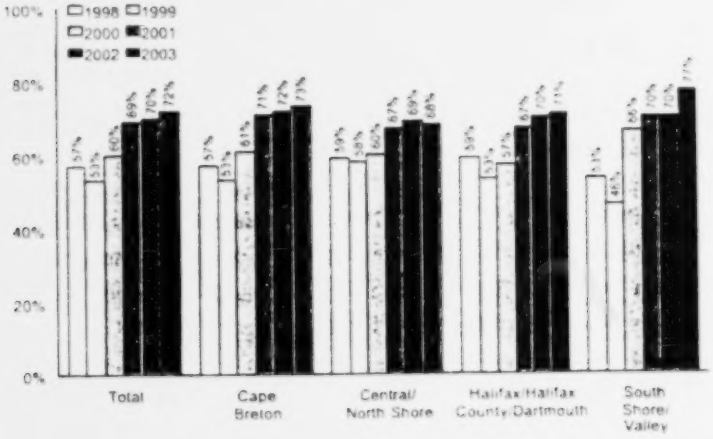
Following a significant improvement in 2001, satisfaction with WCB communications has remained stable over the past two years.

The year 2001 marked a notable improvement for the WCB in terms of meeting injured workers' expectations regarding the provision of information. Happily, this improvement has been sustained over the past two years. Indeed, seven in ten clients surveyed continue to feel they currently receive sufficient information about the WCB and its activities. Saying that, those who have filed an appeal, along with EBU clients and those who are categorized as high-risk are less likely to feel well informed, whereas clients in the South Shore/Valley ISU are most likely to feel they are well informed. (Table 3.1)

It is important to underscore that feeling informed about the WCB and its activities seemingly continues to play a key role in determining clients' overall feelings about their WCB experience. That is, satisfaction with the overall WCB experience remains higher among those who say they receive enough information about the organization, as compared to those injured workers who do not feel as well informed.

Of note, there is little difference between opinions of injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador and those in Nova Scotia in terms of the amount of information received from workers' compensation organizations, with no similar question being asked of injured workers on Prince Edward Island. (Table 3.1)

Currently Receive Enough Information About the WCB
% Saying Yes



To assist with the identification of potential problems, those clients indicating they do not receive enough information (n=408) were asked to elaborate upon their perception. For the most part, clients simply feel they are not provided with adequate information or are uninformed (20%, compared with 18% in 2002) and four in ten would have liked to receive information on entitlements, rights, or benefits. This represents a considerable increase over the past two years (42% in 2003, 35% in 2002, and 16% in 2001). Information concerning procedures for processing claims has also experienced

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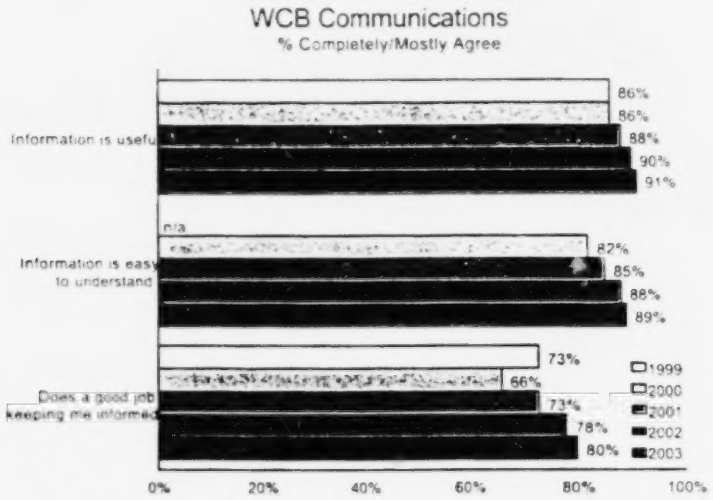
a progressive increase over the past two years (25%, compared with 14% in 2002 and 6% in 2001). A considerable number continue to say they are not aware of how the WCB works (15%, compared with 11%). Other reasons were identified by fewer respondents, and only a relatively small number (6%, unchanged from 2002) are unable to offer a definite response at this time. (Table 3.2)

Although a portion of clients feel there are certain shortcomings in the information provided by WCB, most clients surveyed remain positive concerning the usefulness of the information they receive, the degree to which the information is easily understood, and the degree to which they are informed of changes to their claim. (Tables 3.3.1-3)

For instance, the overwhelming majority of clients agree with the statement **"The information provided by the WCB is useful to me,"** while one in ten mostly (6%) or completely (2%) disagree or have no definite opinion at this time (1%). The high performance in this area is consistent with results reported over the past years. As in previous years, Extended Benefit Unit claimants and those who have filed an appeal continue to be least likely to share this viewpoint. (Table 3.3.3)



Nine in ten clients continue to agree **"The WCB's information is easy to understand,"** while one in ten mostly (9%, up 2 points from 2002) or completely (2%, down 1 point) disagree with this statement. Consistent with last year's findings, those most likely to disagree with this statement, include clients who have filed an appeal and EBU claimants. (Table 3.3.1)

As well, eight in ten clients believe **"The WCB does a good job of keeping me informed about important changes,"** which is in keeping with the previous year's findings, while two in ten mostly (11%, unchanged) or completely (6%, unchanged) disagree. Few have no definite opinion at this time (3%, down 2 %). As in 2002, clients who have filed an appeal as well as Extended Benefit Unit claimants continue to be more likely than others to say the WCB does not keep them informed about important changes. (Table 3.3.2)

As noted, the vast majority of injured workers (88%) surveyed are of the opinion that the information provided by the workers' compensation organization is useful to them and is easy to understand.

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Similarly, most (80%) believe the organization does a good job of keeping them informed about important changes.

The WCB-NS and (to a somewhat lesser extent) the WHSCC in Newfoundland and Labrador receive particularly positive reviews in this regard, while workers on Prince Edward Island are somewhat more critical, especially in terms of the job done by the WCB-PEI of keeping them informed of important changes.

Contacting the WCB

Consistent with the previous year's findings, the overwhelming majority of injured workers contacted the WCB for assistance during the past year, with many perceiving this contact is being effective in addressing their concerns.

During the past year, over eight in ten (86%, compared with 84% in 2002) WCB injured worker clients say they have telephoned the organization for some form of assistance. Those most likely to have contacted the organization within this timeframe include those who have filed an appeal and those classified as high-risk clients. No significant variations were observed across the regions of the province.

Across the provinces, injured workers in Nova Scotia and on Prince Edward Island are somewhat more inclined to have telephoned their respective workers' compensation organization in the past year, as compared with those in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Table 3.4)

For the most part, eight in ten (82%) of those who placed a telephone call for assistance (n=1,290) indicate they were able to do what they set out to accomplish with the request, representing no change since last year. Across the demographic groups examined, those clients who have filed an appeal are less likely to feel they successfully accomplished what they set out to do.

While the majority of injured workers' in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island say they are able to accomplish what they set out to do when they telephone their workers' compensation organization for assistance, injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador are slightly less likely to offer this opinion. (Table 3.5)

WCB Caseworker Commitments

Injured workers who placed a call to the WCB for assistance were asked to indicate whether or not their caseworker followed up on commitments that were made to them at that time. As in 2002, caseworkers are effectual in returning telephone calls to their clients. As well, current results indicate performance continues to improve in terms of WCB workers attending meetings, while arranging appointments to which they committed has remained stable. It is important to note that four in ten (39%) indicated that attending meetings did not apply to their particular situation. Likewise, two in ten indicated that arranging appointments on their behalf was not part of the commitment that their caseworker made to them. (Tables 3.6.1-3)

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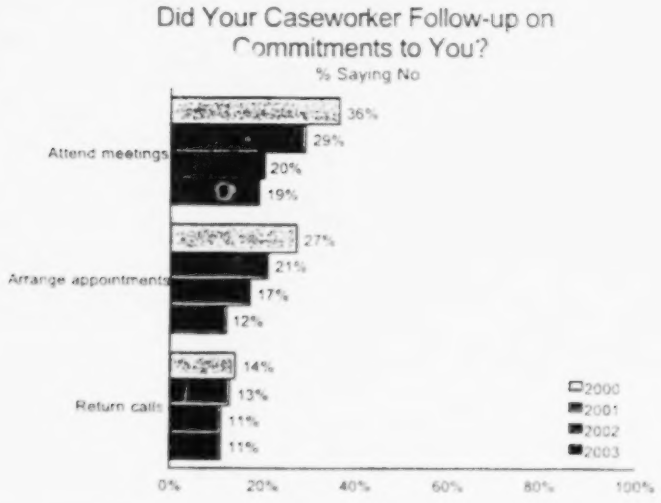

Across the province, injured workers in Cape Breton and the South Shore/Valley region are more likely to report WCB staff followed up on commitments made to them regarding arranging appointments and returning their calls.

In May 2002, injured workers were asked how long it took to have their call returned the last time they called the WCB for assistance. This question was included in the entire survey for 2003. As observed in 2002, six in ten clients (59%, compared with 60% in 2002) had their call returned immediately or within the same day, while an additional one in six (16%, unchanged) say their call was returned the next day. One in ten (10%, compared with 9%) waited two to three days for their call to be returned, while close to one in ten (6%, unchanged) indicate their call was never returned. While results are generally consistent, it is important to note that those who have filed an appeal (22%) are more likely to indicate that their call was returned within two to three days. (Table 3.6.9)

Duration of Administrative Aspect of Claim

Three-quarters of injured worker clients continue to be completely (49%, unchanged since 2002) or mostly (25%, up 5 points) satisfied with the length of time it took the WCB to handle administrative aspects of their claim, which includes reimbursement for such things as prescriptions and travel expenses. In contrast, fewer than two in ten are only somewhat satisfied (10%, unchanged), or somewhat (3%, down 2 points) or completely (3%, down 2 points) dissatisfied. The remaining nine percent have no definite opinion on this matter (compared with 12% in 2002). Results continue to indicate that those in the Halifax region are least likely to indicate satisfaction with the time it took the WCB to handle administrative aspects of their claim, as are those who have filed an appeal and those whose claim length was greater than nine weeks. (Table 3.9.1)

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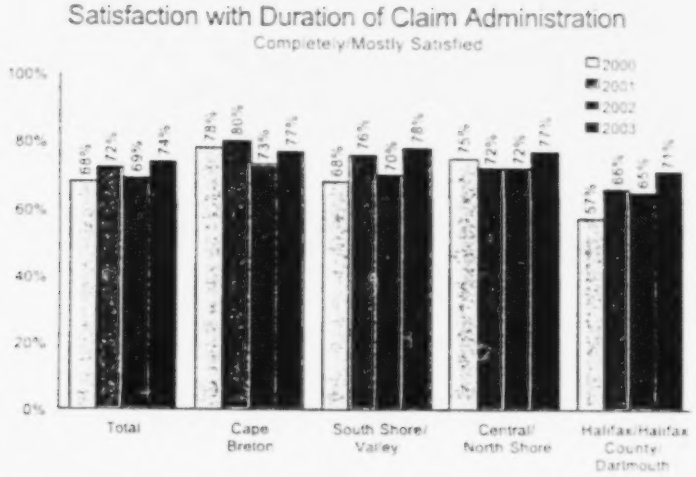

In 2003, client satisfaction ratings were ascertained concerning the ease of understanding the WCB's decision about their claim. In total, just over three-quarters of clients are either completely (49%) or mostly (28%) satisfied with the explanation of the claim decision. In contrast, two in ten are somewhat satisfied (9%) or completely (5%) or mostly (5%) dissatisfied. Perhaps not unexpectedly, those who filed an appeal are more apt to be less satisfied in this regard. (Table 3.9.5R)

Effectiveness of the WCB

The WCB continues to receive a very positive assessment in terms of providing service.

Clients were asked to assess the overall effectiveness of the WCB in providing them with service. Consistent with the previous year, the WCB continues to be assessed very positively, with more than nine in ten rating the WCB as very or somewhat effective in its provision of service. In comparison, very few (4%) clients consider the WCB to be ineffective. (Table 1.8)

While the various client subgroups continue to rate the WCB positively in terms of being effective, differences are observed when examining those who consider the WCB to be very effective. Clients from Cape Breton (73% compared with 72% in 2002), followed by those from the South Shore/Valley region (71%, compared with 66%) are most likely to rate the WCB as being very effective, in comparison to those from the Halifax region (68%, compared with 66%) and those from the Central/North Shore (65%, compared with 74%). In addition, EBU claimants (50%, compared with 43%), those who have filed an appeal (32%, compared with 35%), and high-risk clients (63%) are least likely to rate the WCB as very effective in its provision of service.

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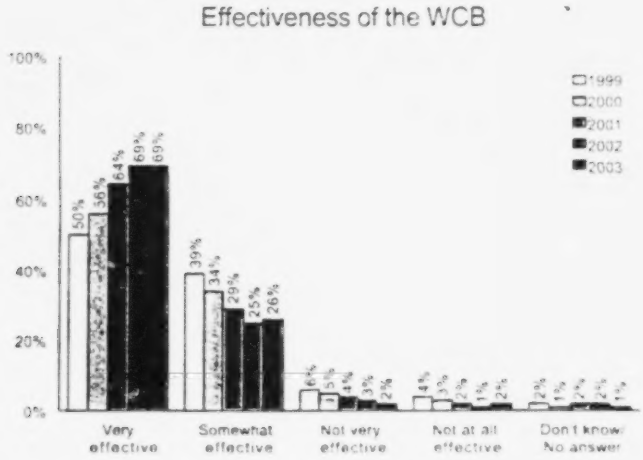

Injured workers in both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are of the opinion that workers' compensation organizations in their respective provinces are effective in terms of the service provided to injured workers, and there is little difference in opinion between injured workers in these two jurisdictions on this matter. Information on this issue was not available for injured workers on Prince Edward Island.

Returning to Work

One-third of clients report they have returned to work following their workplace accident.

As in 2002, the results of this study indicate that just over one-third (35%, compared with 33% in 2002) of those surveyed have returned to work. Similarly, two percent report they returned to work temporarily, however, they were sidelined with a recurring injury, which remains unchanged year over year.

More than six in ten have not returned to work; which continues to imply that, in keeping with previous years, most injured workers who participate in these surveys are doing so while they have active WCB claims. (Table 5.2)

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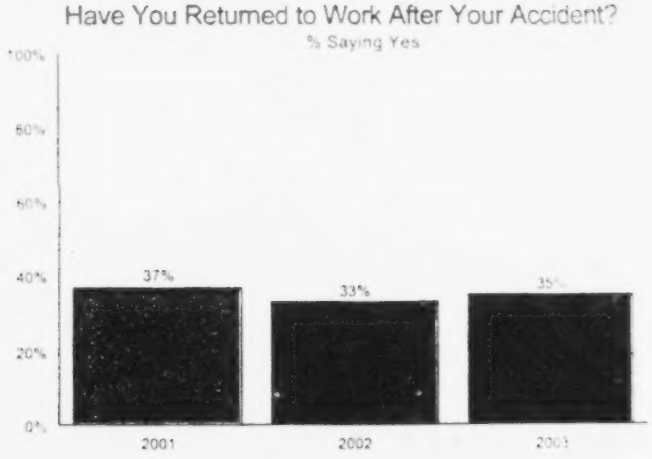

Across the population, medium-risk clients (44%) are twice as likely than high-risk clients (22%) to have returned to work. Similarly, those with claims longer than nine weeks (46%) are almost likely to have returned to work. In contrast, clients in the Cape Breton region (2[illegible]) and those who have filed an appeal (27%) are least likely to have returned to work.

Suggestions for Improvement

Similar to previous years, no single topic emerges as a major issue when injured workers provide suggestions with respect to how the WCB might improve the services it provides to clients.

As in previous surveys, clients were one again, what, if anything, they think could be done to improve the services provided to injured workers. When asked this question (without prompted responses), clients continue to be most likely to state there are no improvements required or do not offer an opinion. The following table illustrates the various suggestions offered by at least four percent of injured workers. (Table 4.5)

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What Can the WCB Do to Improve Its Service?							
	1997 %	1998 %	1999 %	2000 %	2001 %	2002 %	2003 %
Provide more money/benefits	6	11	11	10	11	7	8
Improve communication/More detailed communication	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	7
Faster delivery of benefits	17	19	14	15	9	9	6
Listen to injured workers	n/a	3	5	9	8	4	6
Return phone calls/Quicker response time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	5
Return phone calls/Quicker response time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	5
More access to information	8	18	12	9	5	4	4
Respect injured workers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	3	4
Explain policies/procedures better	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	4
Nothing/Don't know/No answer	25	34	36	40	42	49	47

The most frequently offered suggestions for improvement are provide more money and/or benefits, improve communication/provide more detailed communication, faster delivery of benefits and listen to injured workers although these are mentioned by, at most, only one in ten clients.

Low-risk Claims Clients

The levels of satisfaction expressed by low-risk claims clients are in keeping with those of the larger injured worker population and, overall satisfaction with most service among low-risk claimants has remained stable year over year.

The following section contains a brief summary of results based on a total of 400 interviews conducted with a random sample of injured workers reporting low-risk claims (those involving little or no time loss) during 2003.

Low-risk clients' opinions of the WCB are not appreciably different from the general injured workers population. For instance, low-risk clients express a similar high level of satisfaction with the WCB compared with other clients. Indeed, three-quarters (76%, down 2 points since 2002) of low-risk clients are either completely or mostly satisfied with their experience with the WCB. The rationale attributed to this high level of satisfaction include experiencing no problems with the WCB, quick response time, providing good service, helpful staff, staff attitude, the provision of useful information, and the staff's attitude. In contrast, those who express dissatisfaction do so primarily because of the way their claim was handled, the perceived lack of money received, the length of time it took to process the claim, the lack of adequate information, being turned down or having their claim terminated and a general dissatisfaction with the claim outcome.

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Clients within the low-risk group are relatively satisfied with the each WCB service area examined. While increases in satisfaction for many areas were evident in 2002, it appears that there has been minimal movement in 2003. For instance, low-risk clients continue to express considerable satisfaction with the clarity of letters (86%, up 1 point), politeness of staff (84%, up 3 points), being treated fairly (83%, up 3 points), promptness of staff's response to their questions (82%, up 2 points), accessibility of staff (78%, up 1 point), clarity of brochures (78%, down 4 points), frequency of contact (75%, down 1 point), ability to answer questions (74%, down 2 points), and outcome of their claim (71%, up 1 point). In terms of the administrative aspects of a claim, six in ten (61%, down 4 points) low-risk clients are either completely or mostly satisfied with the length of time it took to handle tasks such as prescriptions, travel expenses and arranging appointments. As well, satisfaction is lower for the length of time it took to get the first benefits cheque (57%, up 2 points), which is considerably lower than the 74 percent noted for the general population of injured workers.

With respect to effectiveness, the overwhelming majority of low-risk clients (93%, unchanged since 2002) continue to believe the WCB is either very or somewhat effective in providing service, while very few (5%, up 1 point) indicate the organization is not very or not at all effective. As well, seven in ten (73%, down 3 points) of low-risk clients are aware the WCB pays for all health care costs associated with a claim.

Overall, close to two-thirds (64%, down 1 point) of low-risk clients are completely or mostly satisfied with the WCB's telephone system, which is slightly lower (77%) than the general population of injured workers. It is interesting to note that, with respect to receiving information, half (49%) indicate that written correspondence in the form of mail or a letter would be most appropriate, while over one third (36%) indicate that the telephone would be the best medium to employ. A few additional clients indicate notification regarding their claim would be best through work, by email, their caseworker or some other form.

Seven in ten (74%, up 2 points) low-risk clients continue to believe that they currently receive enough information about the WCB and its activities, while one-quarter (25%, down 2 points) do not. When asked to indicate what information clients would like to receive but did not, requests included information on entitlements, rights, and benefits, and more information on how WCB works. Other responses included generally not feeling well-informed, procedures for claims and how it works and never having received any information.

Over the past year, the number of low-risk clients who have telephoned the WCB for assistance has remained stable (40%, up 2 points). Among those low-risk clients who have telephoned the WCB within this timeframe for assistance, the overwhelming majority (88%, no change) report they were able to accomplish what they set out to do with the telephone call. In addition, most (80%, up 2 points) of these low-risk clients indicated that their WCB caseworker followed up on commitments made to them, which is consistent with the findings in 2002.

For the most part, when asked to suggest ways the WCB could improve its services for injured workers, six in ten low-risk clients indicate that no improvements are necessary (23%) or they are unable to provide a definite response to this question (37%). Saying that, just fewer than one in ten

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(7%) indicate faster delivery of benefits would improve the WCB. As well, improving communications and providing detail, along with more access to information, and explanations of policies and procedures are also mentioned. No other recommendation is mentioned by more than four percent of those surveyed.

If they were let go by their employer after they returned work following an accident, one-half of low-risk injured workers indicate they would initially seek assistance from the WCB. This finding is consistent with that observed in 2002. Again, in keeping with last year's findings, one-quarter would turn to the Department of Labour, while less than two in ten would go to the employment office, their union or a lawyer.

Overall, the majority of low-risk clients have returned to work since their accident, with three-quarters (74%, down 3 points) indicating such. Injured workers in Cape Breton continue to be somewhat less likely than injured workers from the rest of Nova Scotia to return to work.

Extended Benefit Unit Clients

Although EBU claimants continue to be less likely than other clients to rate the WCB in a favourable manner, significant improvements in satisfaction levels with the WCB have been noted in most areas for the past two years.

Over the past two years, significant improvements have been observed in EBU claimant satisfaction with the WCB in all service areas, with the exception of politeness, where the satisfaction levels have shown improvement, but not to the same degree. While these increases over the past two years are indeed positive, it is still important to keep in mind that EBU claimants continue to offer a considerably less positive evaluation of the WCB when compared with the overall injured worker population.

The following table illustrates satisfaction scores across a variety of service elements among EBU claimants compared with the general client population.

Client Satisfaction Measures
% Completely/Mostly Satisfied

	EBU Population %		General Population %	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Politeness	80	84	87	86
Clarity of letters	70	77	85	85
Ability to answer questions	59	70	80	79
Promptness	62	70	80	80
Frequency of contact	45	61	74	75

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Client Satisfaction Measures
% Completely/Mostly Satisfied

	EBU Population %		General Population %	
Accessibility	64	**76**	76	**75**
Overall WCB experience	47	**57**	72	**74**
Brochure clarity	61	**68**	76	**80**
Outcome of claim	39	**49**	71	**72**

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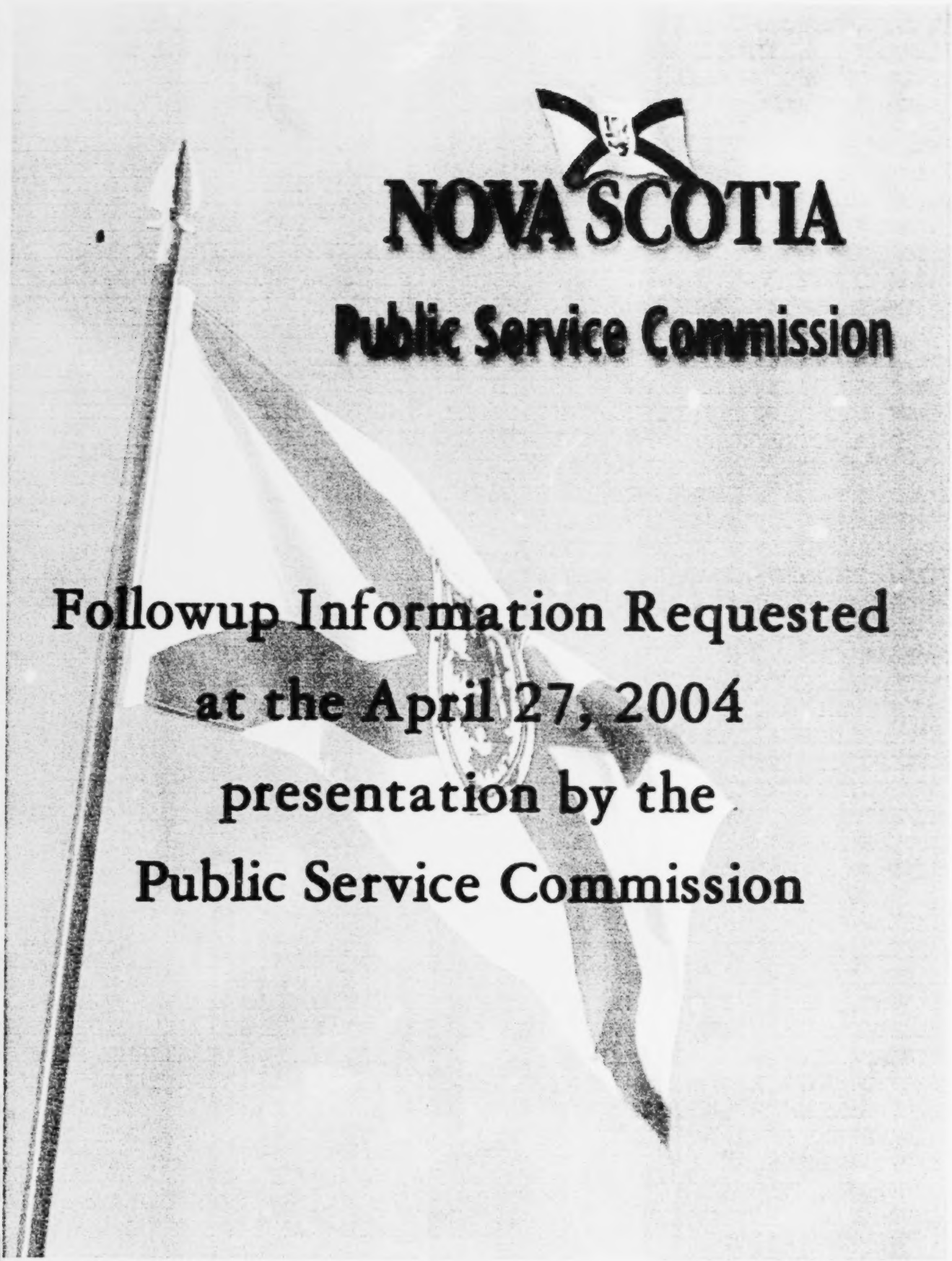
APPENDIX C



NOVA SCOTIA

Public Service Commission

Followup Information Requested at the April 27, 2004 presentation by the Public Service Commission

Questions:

1. **How many persons are employed in management positions in the Civil Service and what percentage are female/male? Of these figures, please provide a breakdown of managerial positions relating to female vs. male within each provincial department.**

As of June, 2004 there were 1,184 MCP (Management Classification Plan) positions in the Civil Service although many of these positions are held by "Individual Contributors" who do not directly manage other employees. Female incumbents account for 521 or 44% of the total number of MCP positions. The breakdown of MCP positions by department is depicted in Appendix A.

2. **In regard to the average pay scale in the Public Service, how does that compare, in each of the age groupings shown to the Standing Committee, with the private sector?**

Information provided by the Human Resources Management System providing the average pay scale for the age groupings shown to the Standing Committee is provided in Appendix B. Appendix C graphically depicts comparative information for compensation for MCP positions in the Nova Scotia Civil Service versus Atlantic public and private sector positions. Data for Bargaining Unit positions is currently being assembled and will be forwarded as soon as possible. Please note that this information has been provided under terms of a license agreement and the data may not be released externally.

3. **Of the commitment to double the existing Civil Service Career Starts Program for yong university graduates, only 5 percent of the Public Service is below the age of thirty. Please provide a numerical breakdown year by year from 1999 to 2004, of Career Starts Program.**

1999 - 2000: 8 interns; 2000 - 2001: 16 interns; 2001 - 2002: 16 interns; 2002 - 2003 17 interns; 2003 - 2004: 16 interns

4. **On the issue of affirmative action, are other provinces in Canada doing a better job than Nova Scotia? Please provide the Standing Committee with statistical information on this issue.**

Limited data is readily available from some jurisdictions however Appendix D presents information comparing Designated Affirmative Action Groups in the civil service of Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

5. **In regard to the number of people who work on contract or on short-term or part-time arrangements with government, what are the numbers of those employees? Please provide a breakdown of those employees by gender and age.**

Numbers of contract/casual/term staff employed fluctuated seasonally. The annual average numbers for 2003 were 1045 casuals, 176 civil service terms and 118 contracts. Appendix E, F and G provide numbers by department/agency/etc., by gender and age and on a monthly basis with an annual average.

6. **Historically, how do absenteeism rates within government compare? Are they declining, are they increasing or are they consistent?**

Absenteeism rates include time lost for general illness, medical/dental and short term illness. In the ten year period from 1994 - 1995 to 2003 - 2004 absenteeism rates in the Nova Scotia Civil Service have declined 19% from an average of 11.41 person days per year to 9.19 person days per year. Appendix H shows the changes in absenteeism rates for all three categories.

Date: 2004 07 12

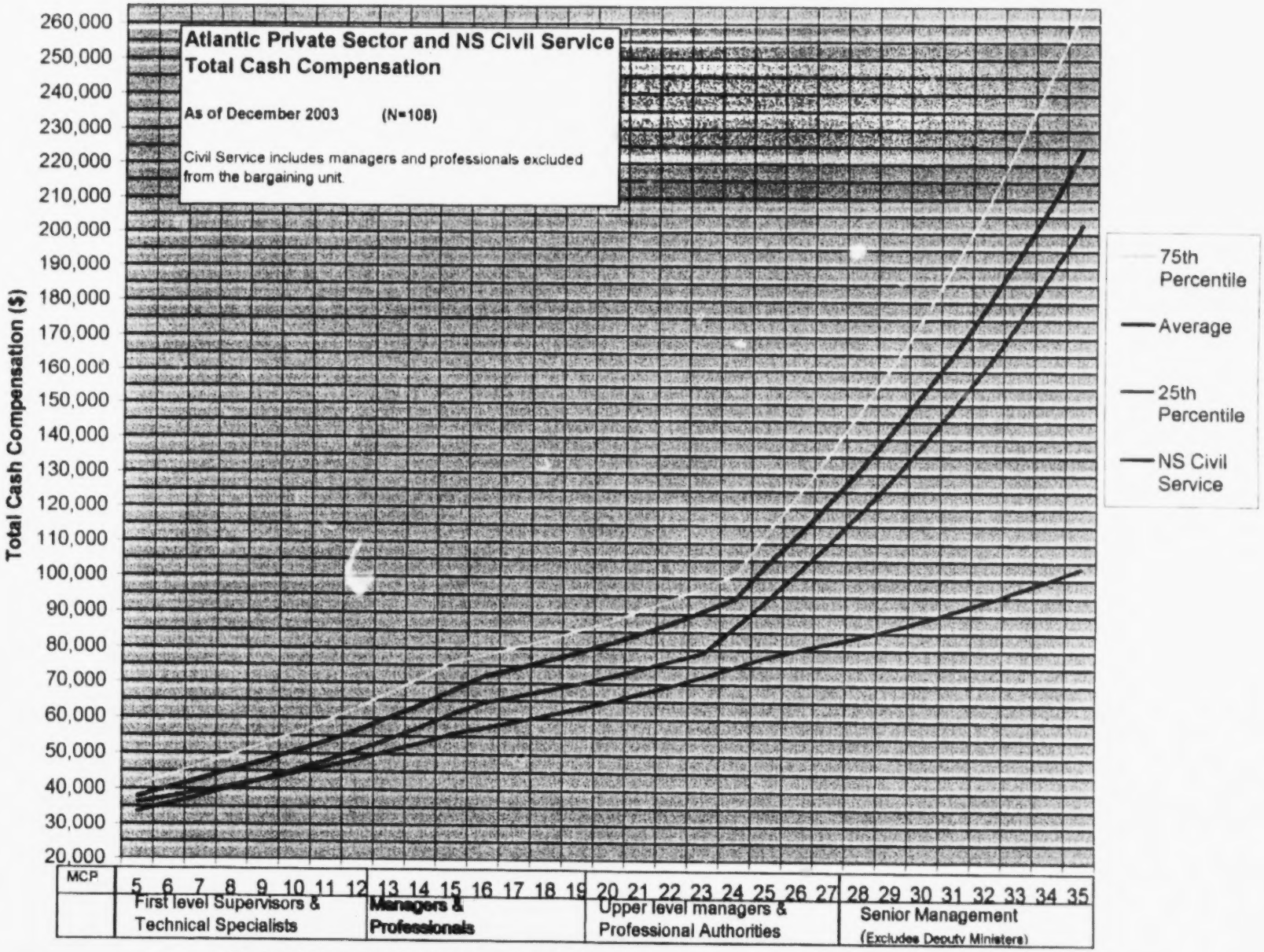
Distribution of MCP Employees
Using Data Extracted
2004 June 01

Dept Desc		
	FEMALE	MALE
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS	3	3
ACADIAN AFFAIRS	0	1
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	9	29
COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA	39	16
COMMUNITY SERVICES	65	53
EDUCATION	23	33
ELECTION EXPENSES	0	1
EMERGENCY MEASURES	0	3
ENERGY	2	10
ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR	20	50
FINANCE	32	34
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTION OF PRIVACY REVIEW OFFICE	3	0
HEALTH	75	33
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION	3	1
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS	2	6
JUSTICE	65	100
NATURAL RESOURCES	15	68
NOVA SCOTIA SECURITIES COMMISSION	2	2
NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD	0	1
NS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION	32	9
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	13	22
OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION	7	4
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL	11	12
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN	1	0
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER	3	1
PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE	0	2
SENIOR CITIZENS SECRETARIAT	1	0
SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS	45	53
SYDNEY TAR PONDS AGENCY (NS)	0	3
TOURISM AND CULTURE	19	22
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS	19	85
TREASURY AND POLICY BOARD	9	5
VOLUNTARY PLANNING	2	1
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL	1	0
Total	521	663

Report: F:\Minister\question 20 subcommittee .rmr

Average Salary for Civil Service Employees Broken Down By Age Groupings

Under 25	25 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 +
$31,109.43	$36,750.75	$43,422.15	$46,588.86	$48,928.90	$46,985.83



Market data supplied by Hay Group. Due to license agreement data must not be released externally.

Government of Nova Scotia

Designated Affirmative Action Groups (As of November 30, 2003)					
	Aboriginal	Blacks	Other Racially Visible	Persons with Disabilities	Women
Civil Service*	0.56%	2.18%	0.84%	5.43%	57.58%
NS Population**	1.8%	2.1%	1.6%	N/A	51.0%
NS Working Age Population** (Age 15-64)	1.7%	1.8%	1.6%	13.4%	50.2%

* Totals based on Civil Servants who have completed the Workforce Survey.
** Statistics Canada Census, 2001

Government of British Columbia

Designated Affirmative Action Groups (As of July 21, 2003)				
	Aboriginal	Visible Minorities	Persons with Disabilities	Women
Civil Service	2.1%	7.7%	5.2%	57.1%
BC Population	3.8%	21.3%	8.0%	50.5%
BC Available Workforce*	3.2%	14.0%	5.5%	55.9%

Based on percentage representation
* Available workforce reflects the occupational and geographic distribution of the ministry

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Designated Affirmative Action Groups				
	Aboriginal	Visible Minorities	Persons with Disabilities	Women
Civil Service	10.2%	2.3%	3.0%	49.7%
Saskatchewan Population	13.5%	2.9%	14.5%	50.7% (15 years and older)*
Saskatchewan Available Workforce*	not available	not available	not available	46.2%

* Information obtained from Statistics Canada

Information Management
Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

6/23/2004

Department	Appointment Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS	Civil Service Term	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	3
ACADIAN AFFAIRS	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	Casual	164	189	192	153	84	104	115	114	132	174	187	184	149
	Civil Service Term	5	5	5	5	6	8	8	9	9	7	8	8	7
	Contract	19	19	19	17	15	12	9	9	14	13	14	12	14
COLLEGE DE L'ACADIE	Casual	34	37	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
	Civil Service Term	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Contract	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	4
COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA	Casual	4	4	5	1	0	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	7	8	9	9	8	8	8	8	9	6
	Contract	11	10	10	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	5
COMMUNITY SERVICES	Casual	82	74	79	73	78	78	88	100	80	76	76	82	81
	Civil Service Term	13	16	16	16	20	20	22	21	26	27	29	28	21
	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EDUCATION	Casual	18	23	23	22	21	25	26	27	21	27	25	25	24
	Civil Service Term	10	9	9	9	9	11	11	11	10	11	11	10	10
	Contract	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	4
ELECTION EXPENSES	Casual	5	5	5	5	6	9	5	10	5	5	4	4	6
EMERGENCY MEASURES	Casual	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	1
	Civil Service Term	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	Casual	0	0	0	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	3
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Contract	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR	Casual	20	20	20	18	27	30	37	39	29	18	20	21	25
	Civil Service Term	12	13	13	11	12	12	13	14	11	10	11	10	12

Information Management
Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

6/23/2004

	Contract	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OFFICE	Contract	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
FINANCE	Casual	12	12	12	12	11	13	11	12	11	12	14	13	12
	Civil Service Term	2	3	3	2	4	3	6	5	5	6	6	6	4
	Contract	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTION OF PRIVACY REVIEW	Casual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
GOVERNMENT HOUSE	Casual	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
HEALTH	Casual	30	29	33	33	36	33	43	44	35	33	36	36	35
	Civil Service Term	8	7	9	9	11	15	14	18	19	13	13	14	13
	Contract	10	11	11	7	6	5	5	6	6	7	7	6	7
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION	Casual	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS	Casual	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1
	Contract	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	1
JUSTICE	Casual	38	39	35	33	31	34	40	40	39	40	43	39	38
	Civil Service Term	25	24	26	28	29	31	32	30	27	28	29	29	28
	Contract	12	10	10	8	10	7	11	11	11	9	9	8	10
LEGISLATIVE EXPENSES	Casual	4	5	5	5	8	10	10	7	4	9	9	6	7
	Contract	13	13	13	14	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	12	14
MINISTERS SALARIES AND EXPENSES	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
N. S. A. C. RESEARCH	Casual	61	66	64	52	65	88	95	103	70	73	77	80	75
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	3
NATURAL RESOURCES	Casual	107	104	101	76	221	460	638	662	500	350	167	139	294

	Civil Service Term	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	8	9	9	9	7
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
NOVA SCOTIA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN	Casual	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
NOVA SCOTIA POLICE COMMISSION	Casual	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NOVA SCOTIA SECURITIES	Civil Service Term	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
NOVA SCOTIA SPORT AND RECREATION COMMISSION	Casual	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Contract	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD	Casual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
NS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION	Casual	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	5	3	3	2	1	2
	Civil Service Term	8	8	8	5	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	4
	Contract	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	4	3	3	3	3
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Casual	3	3	4	6	6	7	9	12	11	10	9	11	8
	Civil Service Term	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3
OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION	Casual	0	0	0	2	3	5	5	6	4	2	3	4	3
	Contract	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL	Civil Service Term	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN	Casual	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
	Contract	8	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6
OFFICE OF THE PREMIER	Contract	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER	Casual	22	21	7	31	28	16	11	11	12	35	14	8	18

PETROLEUM DIRECTORATE	Casual	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Contract	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE	Casual	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	9	9	8	7	7	6
	Civil Service Term	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	13	13	12	14
SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS	Casual	88	87	87	86	88	87	82	83	85	78	72	73	83
	Civil Service Term	25	21	21	19	19	21	18	22	20	23	22	22	21
	Contract	5	6	6	6	7	7	6	5	5	5	6	5	6
SYDNEY TAR PONDS AGENCY (NS)	Civil Service Term	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Contract	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE	Casual	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Contract	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOURISM AND CULTURE	Casual	72	74	78	68	101	182	217	220	208	177	88	71	130
	Civil Service Term	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
TOURISM AND CULTURE	Contract	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	6
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC	Casual	24	23	23	23	29	38	52	56	33	28	28	24	32
	Civil Service Term	7	10	9	8	11	13	11	13	13	13	14	16	12
	Contract	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	3
TREASURY AND POLICY BOARD	Casual	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	3	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4
VOLUNTARY PLANNING	Casual	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL	Casual	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Public Service Commission

Information Management

Date: 2004 07 19

Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

Gender	Appointment Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
Female	Casual	565	586	594	502	529	701	828	872	744	716	596	581	651
	Civil Service Term	99	101	104	101	114	123	123	129	125	127	128	130	117
	Contract	71	71	72	61	59	50	46	48	51	50	46	41	56
Male	Casual	246	254	241	215	334	538	678	702	560	458	303	266	400
	Civil Service Term	56	54	53	54	56	62	62	63	62	57	62	61	59
	Contract	69	71	70	61	65	63	62	64	60	57	60	56	63

Public Service Commission

Date: 2004 07 19

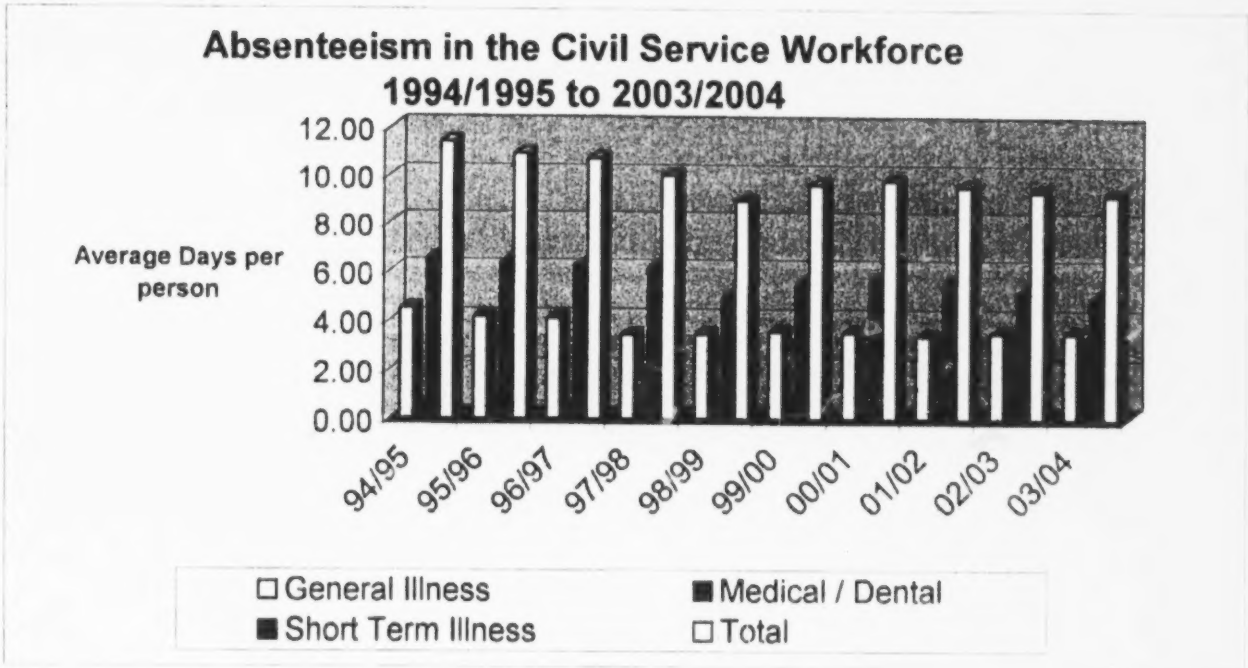
Information Management

Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

Age	Appointment Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
00 - 24	Casual	188	207	193	163	167	316	472	504	304	236	193	187	261
	Civil Service Term	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	4	4	5	5	5	5
	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2
25 - 29	Casual	132	127	128	113	113	157	191	200	166	160	142	134	147
	Civil Service Term	25	26	27	26	32	36	37	40	39	36	35	33	33
	Contract	22	23	22	19	20	17	19	21	20	20	20	20	20
30 - 39	Casual	182	177	181	168	211	268	292	300	280	267	194	186	226
	Civil Service Term	61	58	61	60	64	69	70	69	67	66	70	69	65
	Contract	42	40	42	37	37	31	31	30	30	29	29	27	34
40 - 49	Casual	156	170	172	140	184	229	253	256	257	228	179	166	199
	Civil Service Term	44	43	39	37	41	50	47	49	44	48	50	55	46
	Contract	35	37	36	32	34	33	29	29	26	21	19	15	29
50 - 59	Casual	99	103	102	82	118	178	196	208	204	193	119	108	143
	Civil Service Term	16	17	19	21	22	20	21	23	26	22	23	22	21
	Contract	33	33	32	27	26	25	23	26	27	26	27	25	28
60 +	Casual	54	56	59	51	70	91	102	106	93	90	72	66	76
	Civil Service Term	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	7	7	7	7	7	6
	Contract	6	7	8	5	5	5	4	4	5	8	8	7	6

Absenteeism in the Civil Service Workforce
1994/1995 to 2003/2004

	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04
General Illness	4.46	4.15	4.07	3.41	3.44	3.54	3.51	3.37	3.50	3.50
Medical/Dental	0.41	0.42	0.42	0.48	0.54	0.60	0.64	0.67	0.73	0.77
Short Term Illness	6.54	6.35	6.22	6.11	4.96	5.47	5.62	5.50	5.10	4.92
Total	**11.41**	**10.92**	**10.71**	**10.00**	**8.94**	**9.61**	**9.77**	**9.54**	**9.33**	**9.19**


Absenteeism in the Civil Service Workforce
1994/1995 to 2003/2004
Average Days per person
12.00
10.00
8.00
6.00
4.00
2.00
0.00
94/95
95/96
96/97
97/98
98/99
99/00
00/01
01/02
02/03
03/04
General Illness
Medical / Dental
Short Term Illness
Total